

Feeding

There is no need to feed plants kept outside; they will naturally attract and trap enough insects.

Pitcher plants will often become clogged with insects, and in the summer, Flytraps often have a fly in every leaf.



Flytraps need live insects; their movement is what stimulates the trap to close completely and start the digestion process. Never give them meat, and do not tease the traps, as each trap only works a few times and must grow open again. This takes a lot of energy out of the plant!

Dormancy

Most of the United States, and all of Canada, has a definite winter season; plants from these areas require a winter rest, or **dormancy**, to thrive.

While you may succeed in growing a Pitcher plant or a Flytrap through the winter indoors, it will not grow well. It will eventually weaken and die.

Fortunately, Pacific Northwest winters are mild enough that most can survive all except the most severe freezes. If there is a freeze of 25 or less, bring the plants in for the duration. Most pitcher plants can survive these freezes, but some may die.

During the winter, plants should be removed from the trays; our frequent winter rain and cool weather will usually keep them moist enough. Deep water in winter can cause root rot and loss of the plant.



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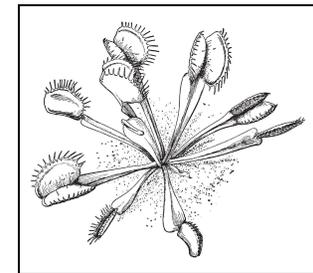
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Carnivorous Plants



Carnivorous plants grow on every continent in the world except Antarctica, in a surprisingly diverse array of climates. Some grow in wet bogs, some in tropical jungles. Others grow in cold cloud forests, and some even grow underwater!

Most carnivorous plants you find in plant shops—Venus Flytraps, Pitcher Plants, and Cobra Lilies—are temperate plants, from areas with warm summers and cold winters.



These plants trap insects and other small animals in many different ways; active traps, passive/pitfall traps, and sticky traps!

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Containers

Because of the perception that carnivorous plants come from jungles, and from sensationalist marketing, there's still a common belief that they need to be grown in terrariums and kept steamy wet.

Actually, this will kill most species in the long run. The best container for carnivorous plants is a plastic pot. Terrariums are interesting but make it difficult to control water, and are problematic when it comes time for winter dormancy.

Adult fly traps like at least a 4" tall pot, and pitcher plants need to be potted according to size. Group plantings in large pots can be stunning!

Soil

For most of the North American carnivores, like Flytraps and Pitcher Plants, the most convenient soil is a mix of 50:50 pure peat and perlite, or quartz sand. Cobra Lilies do better in long-fiber live sphagnum, or a mix of sphagnum and coarse perlite.

You can buy this ready made or mix your own, but make sure that the peat has no additives. Added fertilizers will kill carnivorous plants. **Do not** use normal potting soils!

Light

Most of these plants naturally grow in open bogs or savannahs, so they require extremely bright light all day long. It is almost impossible to provide enough light to grow them well indoors—it's easier to provide the light they need outside.

Cobra Lilies *hate* hot roots and can tolerate lower light levels. So a good way to provide for this is to grow them where they will get morning light, but no direct afternoon sun.

A Venus Flytrap might survive indoors if you have an unobstructed south-facing window that gets sun all day, but keep dormancy requirements in mind. If you live in an apartment and have a south-facing balcony, you're in luck!

Temperature

Our summers are warm enough for all of the North American carnivorous plants, but they will be happiest in a sheltered, south-facing position for maximum growth.

Water

Nearly all of the North American carnivorous plants are bog plants, and all of them like constantly damp-to-wet soil.

The easiest way to provide this is the tray method, which means standing the pots in a tray of water at least half an inch deep. Never let them dry out completely.

Rainwater or purified (distilled or reverse osmosis) water is best for carnivores. This is because lime is harmful to them. Fortunately Seattle water is mostly neutral, so it can be used with little problem!

Fertilization

Don't. While some growers use a very weak solution (applied to the leaves only), it's best left alone until you consider yourself a carnivorous plant expert!