

Growth Phases

Many Mexican Butterworts have two different growth phases; flat, sticky carnivorous leaves during the summer, and succulent leaves during the winter. Different species and hybrids enter and exit winter phase at different times.

When your Mexican Pinguicula is in the carnivorous stage, the leaves will be slimy with upturned drool edges. These edges prevent their digestive enzymes from flowing off the leaf. They will prefer warm and humid conditions.

Pinguicula's succulent leaves are smaller, and without upturned edges. They have a waxier texture. They prefer to be cooler and drier than their carnivorous counterparts. During the succulent stage is the best time to propagate or repot!



A Ping going into dormancy—succulent leaves are sprouting from the center while the carnivorous leaves remain on the peripheral.

Resources

For more information on caring for specific varieties, check out the following resources:

- **The International Carnivorous Plant Society**
(www.carnivorousplants.org)
- **A World of Pinguicula**
(www.pinguicula.org)

Mexican Pinguiculas (Butterworts)

Known affectionately as “Pings” in the hobby, Mexican butterworts are some of the most ideal carnivores to grow as houseplants.



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Soil

Pinguiculas catch mostly fungus gnats, which are quite common in homes with a lot of houseplants.

But they are not bog plants; instead, they grow on mossy rock faces and even on the sides of trees. Thus, their requirements are slightly different from those of typical North American carnivores.

Unlike most carnivorous plants, Mexican butterworts are not sensitive to lime in the soil or water. In fact, they sometimes even appreciate it!

The best soil mix is a mostly mineral mix of 1 part pumice, perlite, sand, and peat. Some growers like to add a bit of dolomite and iron oxide, which helps some species achieve better color. Others base their mix on turfase or clay-based aquatic media.

Temperature

Pings are comfortable at average household temperatures, but will show their best color when they get cool nights—especially in autumn!

Water

Seattle tap water will work just fine for watering your butterworts.

When the plant is producing carnivorous leaves, you can leave the pot sitting in a bit of water, though it's best to let the extra water dry up for a day or two before watering again.

In the winter succulent stage, they can survive with just moist soil. Take care not to overwater! The timing of the winter/summer phases can be unpredictable!



Light

Mexican butterworts appreciate bright light. A bright east window is usually enough, though they will produce better color in a south window.

Mexican pinguiculas are very easy to grow under lights, and often respond with brilliant color in their leaves.



Decreasing light levels, and daily minimum temperatures, are the main factors that trigger dormancy. This is when the butterwort will lose its carnivorous leaves.



However, many Mexican Pinguiculas will also bloom during this winter phase!