

Carnivorous Plants Care Guide



Introduction

Use the following guide to care for carnivorous plants such as Pitcher Plants, Sundew and Venus' Flytraps.

Safety Precautions

The materials used to grow carnivorous plants are considered nonhazardous. Please follow all laboratory safety guidelines.

Maintenance Instructions

Upon arrival carnivorous plants are ready to be transplanted into a covered terrarium. Carnivorous plants thrive in bright light and at temperatures from 18–24 °C. Direct sunlight can elevate the temperature in a terrarium to levels high enough to burn or kill plants.

Prepare the terrarium by placing 1–2" of gravel in the bottom. Cover the gravel with acid bog soil (two parts peat to one part potting soil). Spread a layer of sphagnum moss over the soil. The terrarium may be watered with distilled or deionized water or rainwater. Fresh tap water may contain chemicals that will harm or kill the plants. Add enough water to cover the gravel but not the soil. Soil should be moist but not soggy.

Pitcher plants should be placed soil deep enough so that the roots can grow around the wet gravel. Venus flytraps should be inserted so that their roots grow in the soil just above the water level. Sundew plants should be planted toward the top of the soil since they do not require as much water.

Handle plants gently as excessive touching will injure carnivorous plants. Water plants once a month or when condensation stops appearing on the sides of the terrarium. These plants require a humidity level of about 50–90% and should be aerated once a week.

These plants are adapted to nitrogen-poor soils and have evolved elaborate insect trapping mechanisms as a supplementary source of nitrogen. They may also be fed a variety of different insects listed in the *Tips* section. Carnivorous plant should not be fertilized as this may cause chemical burns and possibly death.

Feeding

- Carnivorous plants may be fed the following insects—once or twice a month is enough.
- Sundew eat fruit flies. *Note:* Vestigial or apterous fruit flies are recommended as they will not fly away.
- Venus flytraps eat small pieces of mealworm, vestigial fruit flies, ants, or small beetles. Do not feed them hamburger or other raw meat. Venus flytraps do not fully close unless the insect moves.
- Venus flytraps, some sundews, and pitcher plants go dormant for ~ three months in winter. Most of the plant will die back. Keep the dormant plant cool, 40–55 °F, in the dark, and damp (not wet).
- Pitcher plants can survive long periods of time without carnivorous supplements using the nutrients derived from the planting medium.
- Capturing and stunning insects by placing them in a freezer for a few moments is another feeding alternative.

Tips

- If the leaves begin to darken and appear that they are dying this is not necessarily the case. After shipment plants need time to adjust to their new environment. It is not dead and new growth should appear in two to three weeks.
- Carnivorous plants are not tropical plants and they should be allowed to die back in winter for the long-term health of the plant. They should re-emerge in three months or so.
- Do not trip the Venus flytrap unnecessarily. This can cause enough energy depletion to kill the plant.

Disposal

Please consult your current *Flinn Scientific Catalog/Reference Manual* for general guidelines and specific procedures, and review all federal, state and local regulations that may apply, before proceeding. Do not release carnivorous plants into local environments. Dispose of according to Flinn Scientific Biological Disposal Method Type VI.

The materials necessary to grow *Carnivorous Plants* are available from Flinn Scientific, Inc.

Catalog No.	Description
FB0261	Aquarium Gravel, 5 lb bag
FB0268	Aquarium/Terrarium, Economy, 1 gallon with Screen Cover
LM1119	<i>Drosophila</i> , Apterous Recessive
LM1123	<i>Drosophila</i> , Vestigial Recessive
LM1137	Pitcher Plant (<i>Sarracenia</i>)
LM1138	Sundew (<i>Drosera</i>)
FB0548	Terrarium, Heavy-Duty
LM1139	Venus' Flytrap (<i>Dionaea</i>)
FB0102	Sphagnum Moss, Long Fiber, 2-gallon Bag
LM1146	Insectivorous Plant Terrarium Set
LM1215	Insectivorous Terrarium Set, Large

Consult your *Flinn Scientific Catalog/Reference Manual* for current prices.