

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

The World's Most Unusual Plants. Carnivorous plants have evolved over hundreds of years in parts of the world with poor soils by trapping and consuming insects to get their necessary nutrients. They are an unusual and fun addition to the typical houseplant repertoire.

Carnivorous plants like bright, but indirect, light, and high humidity. To increase the humidity plant them in a terrarium or add a pebble tray underneath. Keep plants moist, but not soggy, and potted in a peat moss-based planting medium. Because of additives in our tap water, it is best to water with distilled or filtered water. Carnivorous plants do not require fertilization as they get all the nutrition, they need from their unique eating habits.

Some of the more and less common carnivorous plants:

Bladderwort. The bladderworts are aquatic plants that catch their prey by using vacuum-sealed bladders. When the hairs lining the bladder are triggered, a door-like flap opens, and the prey is sucked inside.

Butterwort. Butterwort produces a sticky substance on their flat leaves, formed in a rosette. Once insects are trapped on the surface, digestion begins.

Pitcher Plant. Pitcher plants have hollow, pitcher-shaped leaves that produce sweet nectar at the top. Insects slide down the slick leaf as they try to find more nectar and are unable to climb out. There are 2 types of Pitcher plants, the hooded and lidded varieties. *Nepenthes coccinea* is a lidded variety with bright red pitchers that attract insects and once inside they drown. Another variety is *Sarracenia dummondii* which has pale green tubes streaked purple. The hooded pitcher plant, *Darlingtonia californica*, has a snake-like appearance with green tubes that can grow up to 2 feet in length! The tubes have a dark purple top resembling a cobra head, thus its common name, Cobra plant.

Sundew. Sundews produce a sticky liquid on multiple hairs, which then trap numerous insects; once a fly or mosquito is captured, the hairs curl up and digest their prey.

Venus Fly Trap. Venus Fly Traps have two leaves lined with hairs; when the hairs are triggered twice, the leaves snap shut, and the insects are digested. A mature Venus Fly trap will have about 5-12 traps at a time. It is normal for some traps to turn brown and die. Clip them off and the plant will work on producing more.



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