

Carnivorous Plant Cultivation Guide: (Garden Centres & Hobbyists)

Introduction

Although the cultivation of carnivorous plants can vary depending upon the species, there are general requirements applicable to almost all insect-eating plants.

Humidity: Most carnivorous plants require a minimum of 30% to 40% relative humidity. Although 50% humidity is optimal for general cultivation, the plants can tolerate brief intervals of lower humidity throughout the day. *Nepenthes* species are especially sensitive to low humidity conditions.

Lighting: Light levels should be bright; some species such as North American pitcher plants perform best under full sun or intense artificial lighting.

Nutrition: Nutrients should only be provided to the trapping mechanisms; never apply fertilizer or fertilized water to the potting media.

Temperature: The temperature range during the growing season should be 12° - 30° Celsius, depending upon the species. North America pitcher plants and Venus Flytraps require a lower temperature during their winter dormancy period. A temperature between 4° to 10° is ideal.

Watering: Water chemistry and frequency of watering is critical. The vast majority of carnivorous plants cannot tolerate hard water, which indicates high levels of dissolved calcium carbonate and other minerals. The PH of hard water would also be too high. The water should be acidic, with a PH of approximately 5.5 (a PH of 7 is neutral). Most carnivorous plants prefer a consistently damp media.

Specific Requirements

Type and Genus	Cultivation
Butterworts (<i>Pinguicula</i> species)	Butterworts should be grown in bright light or part shade in summer. The media should always be damp. <i>Pinguicula primuliflora</i> can be grown in a tray containing up to 1 cm of water. Mexican Butterwort species prefer a drier potting media and shouldn't be placed in a tray containing water.
Pitcher plants, temperate (<i>Sarracenia</i> species)	North American Pitcher Plants perform best in full sun, which stimulate the coloration of the pitchers. The media should always be damp and potted plants can be grown in a tray containing up to 2.5 cm of water. <i>Sarracenia</i> require a chilly winter dormancy period for optimum health.
Pitcher plants, tropical (<i>Nepenthes</i> species)	Tropical Pitcher Plants are predominately native to the humid tropical rainforests of southeast Asia. They perform best in bright light. Full sun should be avoided from late spring until early autumn, except in the early morning or evening. High humidity is required for optimal growth. <i>Nepenthes</i> may not produce pitchers if the humidity is too low.
Sundews (<i>Drosera</i> species)	Sundews should be grown in bright light. Some species prefer full sun. The media should always be damp. Potted plants can be grown in a tray containing 1 cm of water.
Venus Flytraps (<i>Dionaea muscipula</i>)	Venus Flytraps perform best in full sun or very bright light. They should never be allowed to dry out. Top water the media only. Avoid splashing water on the traps. Flytraps require a cool winter dormancy period.