

Carnivorous plants are the slightly spooky, relentlessly ravenous secrets of the indoor garden. They can be used to quell fungus gnat populations, and offer endless entertainment for kids and adults alike. Carnivory or, ‘the eating of animal flesh’ is estimated to have evolved independently in plants at least seven times across every continent but Antarctica, with more than 600 species documented. These are hardy, low-maintenance, full-sun plants that don’t need too much to thrive.

COMMON CARNIVORES & THEIR CARE



SARRACENIA
TRUMPET PITCHERS
Full Sun
Peat Moss / perlite
Consistently wet soil



DROSERA 🌴
SUNDEWS
Full Sun
Peat moss / perlite
Consistently wet soil



DARLINGTONIA
COBRA LILIES
Full Sun
Peat moss / perlite
Consistently wet soil



NEPENTHES 🌴
PITCHER PLANTS
Part Sun
Peat moss / perlite
Evenly moist soil, not soaking



DIONAEA
VENUS FLY TRAPS
Full Sun
Peat moss / perlite / sand
Consistently wet soil



PINGUICULA 🌴
BUTTERWORTS
Full Sun
Peat moss / perlite / sand
Moist soil during carnivorous phase, let dry during succulent phase

Other cool species to check out:

- **UTRICULARIA** | Terrestrial Bladderworts (*U. livida* especially)
- **CEPHALOTUS** | Albany Pitcher Plants 🌴
- **HELIAMPHORA** | Sun Pitchers

TROPICAL vs. TEMPERATE

This is probably the most important distinction to make in how you’ll care for your carnies. Both types can thrive indoors, but temperate zone varieties require a dormancy period. This means moving them to a cool, but protected place during wintertime. If it’s your first carnivorous plant, we recommend starting with a resilient tropical variety, denoted by the palm tree icon. 🌴

Many tropical carnivorous plants do like to be outside in indirect light in the summertime, where they can catch more food for themselves before coming in for the wintertime.

FEEDING TIME!

NUTRIENTS | Most plants get their nutrients from the soil through their roots, but carnivorous plants originate in boggy soil with little or no nutrients. To take advantage of environments where most plants would drown and starve, carnivorous plants have developed unique adaptations. While their roots are only useful for absorbing water and holding the plant in place, their leaves are the botanical equivalents of mouths and stomachs. Instead of sucking nutrients up from the soil, they turn the typical food chain upside-down.

Unless you live in an entirely bug free environment, you won't really need to feed your plants yourself, but it's definitely fun every once in a while. Get plant appropriate insects from your local pet store and DON'T OVERFEED. For example, a few houseflies for your flytrap or six crickets for your pitcher plant every month is more than enough. Fluval 'Bug Bites,' frozen bloodworm or other high quality fish food can also be a great choice

WATER | Only use filtered or distilled water. Tap water over time can cause damage. To be certain of a source, use a TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) meter. Ratings must be under 100 ppm. The lower, the better.

LIGHT | Carnies love at least 2-5 hours of direct sun per day. Place in or very near a bright sunny windowsill. Alternately use a full spectrum grow light at 12-16 hours in the summer, and 8-12 in the winter.

PLANTING TIME!

Bog Garden

Benefits: Easy to care for, very beautiful once established, lots of plant options

1. Find a wide, shallow pot with or without drainage, depending on if you'd like to have a water tray.
2. Add in a mixture of 50% peat moss and 50% perlite. Wet with water, until sodden.
3. Lay out your plants. We recommend placing tall plants in the back for a directional view, or in the middle for a 360° display with smaller plants around.
4. Feel free to experiment with decorations, like rocks, hills, mosses or other small carnivorous plants!

To water this type of container, keep the soil moist, but allow water levels to drop to allow for some aeration between floodings. Don't let it dry out completely.

Greenhouse Terrarium

Benefits: Great for growing lots of different species with different soil and water requirements, but similar heat and light needs. For example, a nepenthes and a cephalotus can grow together.

1. Using a terrarium or old aquarium, place individual pots of carnies inside.
2. Attach a full spectrum grow light over the greenhouse. Fluorescent tubes or LED banks are great options.
3. If humidity or temperature are below 50% or about 80°F respectively, you should consider a fogger or small heat pad.
4. Add some air plants or orchids for diversity, as they too will love the light and humidity!

MORE RESOURCES

Savage Garden - Book By Peter D'Amato
Siegfried Hartmeyer - on YouTube

Hungry Plants - Children's Book by
Mary Batten, Illustrated Paul Mirocha