**Natural Light:** Carnivorous plants are sun lovers. To be successful indoors they need to be on a bright sunny windowsill or table top next to the window with direct sun hitting the plant at least two to five hours. East or southeast facing windows are probably the best indoor location. West and southwest facing windows are also good, but if the afternoon sun is too hot in your house, screening or sheer curtains may be needed to make the sunlight less harsh and keep the plants from burning.

**Artificial Light:** If you don’t have enough natural light, use full spectrum fluorescent grow lights. Halide and sodium incandescent bulbs meant for growing plants are also excellent, but more expensive. In the summer you will need 12 to 16 hours of artificial light and in winter 8 to 12 hours.

**Rest Periods:** Venus fly traps, American pitcher plants, and other temperate Droseras, Pinguiculas and Utricularias have dormancy requirements triggered by the shortening of day light. If temperate zone plants do not get a rest, they will slowly decline over the course of several years.

**Here’s how to help your temperate plants rest:** Dormancy requires cooler temperatures – not necessarily as cold as their native habitat but protected from hot sun and warm temperatures indoors. Sometime between Halloween and Thanksgiving, move the plant to the coolest north-facing windowsill in a room that is not overly heated especially at night. Basements and garage windowsills can also fill this need as well as an enclosed porch that gets chilly in winter. Bring out of rest as early as Valentine’s Day, but not later than Easter.

**Feeding:** Outdoors, plants will catch their own food. You may place your indoor windowsill plant outside in a shady area temporarily for "the hunt" – but DON’T place it out in a hot sunny area. Indoors, the plant will catch what comes along. If you have an insect free environment, you can go to a pet store where you will find a great assortment of live and freeze dried insect food. If you are doing the feeding, **don’t** overfeed. A once-a-month feeding schedule from spring through autumn usually does the trick. (For example: a few houseflies for your flytrap plant or a dozen or so crickets for your pitcher plant a month is more than enough.)

Note on Venus flytraps: Each individual trap has about 2 to 6 closings in its lifetime. The individual trap (not the entire plant) begins to turn black and eventually dies. Trim it away. The plant puts out a new trap. This is why it is not nice to tease the flytrap if you are not giving it food.
Fertilizing: Not necessary if your plant is getting enough insects to eat. Types of fertilizers needed by different plants vary and even the growers can't totally agree. **It is best to see that your plants get enough to eat and skip the fertilizer. Too much or the wrong type of fertilizer will kill the plant.**

Water: Rain water, distilled water or reverse osmosis filtered water is necessary for the long haul. You can use tap water in a pinch but over time it will cause problems. (There are, however, some public water systems whose water is very low in minerals and this is okay – your water company can supply you with an analyses of your tap water.) Carnies are swamp plants and it is hard to overwater them. They do not, however, like water over their crowns. Keep the pot in water up to about 1/3 to 1/2 its height.

Soil: A good general mix is 50/50 of **sphagnum** (must say "sphagnum" on the package) peat moss and either washed sand or propagation grade perlite (fine or medium). No lime or other additives. Don't use general purpose potting soils...they have additives. Carnies don't do well in a general mix. The carmies sold at Sky are in their appropriate mix, but if you are purchasing plants on line or from a grower, be sure to ask which media the plant prefers.


Special Note: Carnies do well in terrariums and bogs of your creation and many of the plants will survive outdoors through the winter with proper care. Check out *The Savage Garden* or go on line for some great ideas.