

# Propagating Venus Flytraps



**Bill Matthews**  
**New England Carnivorous Plant Society**  
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I successfully propagate Venus Flytraps by splitting plants that have grown into clumps into several new plants, or create new plantlets from leaf cuttings. You can too.

Here is my technique:

The soil mix I use is a 50:50 mix of peat moss and sand (NOT beach sand - we all know this, right?). When doing leaf cuttings, I choose containers that will hold an inch of soil and are long enough to accommodate the leaves of the Flytrap I will be propagating. I really like to use those small clear plastic containers with a hinged or separate lid - the kind that blueberries, raspberries or grape tomatoes are packaged in at the supermarket.

I take the parent plant and knock it out of the pot then carefully remove some of the soil from around it. After that, I place the plant in a bowl of rainwater and swish it around to wash away as much soil as possible. Now I can easily see the bulb and roots of the plant. If I have a clumping plant, I can split the bulb with my fingers or use a small X-acto knife and separate the bulb making sure each part has a root attached. Before repotting, I let these soak for about 15 minutes in a bowl of water with a few drops of "Superthrive" added. I can also make leaf cuttings, especially since when splitting a Venus Flytrap leaves often will fall right off. My thinking is, "might as well give it a try!"

To start leaf cuttings, I begin by putting about an inch of soil in the container, and make sure it is wet. I can use the leaves that have fallen off while splitting, or gently peel away leaves from the bulb of a plant - making sure to include some of the white base as this is where the new baby plants will emerge from. I usually do at least 3 or 4 leaves at a time since some may die without yielding any new plants. I place the leaves on top of the soil, keeping in mind the new plantlets will spring from the whitish base portions. I alternate the leaf position placement on the soil surface so the new plants don't all come up in one area. Next, I sprinkle pinches of the soil mix over the whitish base and bottom 1/3 of the leaves, about 1/8 inch thick. I close the lid, or cover with plastic wrap held in place by a rubber band, or place in a sealed ziplock bag. When *you* try this, place it in a bright windowsill, or under lights, and wait. And wait. And wait some more. Check from time to time and make sure the soil is moist. Be patient. The leaves may slowly die and blacken from the trap down towards the base. Just when you think it hasn't worked, when it's covered in moss or slime mold and you feel like throwing the whole thing out..... then.....you may notice the tiniest tiny green vft sprouts poking up. You may need to use a magnifying glass to see them. It may take a month or more. Sometimes you will be lucky and get a large clump of baby plants, or even many many little plants sprouting up along an entire leaf blade. At this stage you can open the lid or remove the plastic, and let the plants grow - just make sure the soil stays moist.

When the plantlets are large enough, feed them fruit flies or small ants - it REALLY encourages their growth, otherwise they will stay very small for a long time. When they are a little larger, you can separate and individually pot the plants by scooping the clumps out (including the soil around and underneath them). Place in a bowl of water with a drop or two of "Superthrive". One trick I use to separate a clump of baby plantlets is to take a pair of tweezers, close them, place the closed tip into the clump and let go, separating some of the plants. I pot the individual baby plants in 2 inch tall plastic Dixie cups, in which I have melted drainage holes with a soldering iron. I use a 'dryish' soil mix for this carefully filling soil around the young plant. Then I wash the plant into place using a spray bottle, or an old-fashioned ketchup/mustard bottle - the kind with the pointy tip. The plant will settle somewhat and you may need to sprinkle more soil around it and water again.

Happy Growing!!

*Wild Bill*