

Venus Fly Trap Care Sheet

The New England Carnivorous Plant Society

By Jeff Matteson

Venus flytraps (*Dionaea muscipula*) are native to North and South Carolina where they grow in a much milder climate than here in Rhode Island.

Fly Traps are very easy to grow even here if you follow a few basic steps.

Grow your plants outside in full sun. They do not do well indoors! They are warm temperate plants and grow much better outside where they get rain, hot days and warm nights. They also have an endless supply of insects to eat outdoors.

Flytraps grow in very acidic soil. A very easy mixture to use is 2 parts Sphagnum Peat Moss and 1 part sand, not beach sand. Do not use regular potting soil or any commercial fertilizer. One plant will grow very well in a 4 to 6 inch pot. Sit the pot in a saucer with 1/4 to 1/2 inch of rain, or distilled water at all times.

Fly traps are slow to start in the spring, but when the summer heats up they start growing quite fast. They will look their best usually in August, right up until dormancy around late October. Giving them a good long dormancy is very important. If you bring them inside in the winter to keep them growing they will decline over time. They like to be very chilly in winter, but do not like to freeze! You can keep them in an unheated basement in winter, or an unheated garage.

Another way to give your plant a good winter rest is to unpot it and wash off all soil, cut off all dead leaves and put it in a zip lock bag. Before sealing the zip lock bag a quick shot or two of a liquid fungicide will help protect the rhizome during dormancy. Then you put the bag in a container in your refrigerator. Make sure you label the container so no one thinks it's a salad! You do this just before your first frost in the fall and keep it in the fridge until mid March. They do not need light while dormant. This works very well. Pot the plant up again in the Spring, be careful of late frosts. Put the plant out in full sun again and just let it be. They do very well on their own and do not need much summer care other than watering. As old traps die, new ones will grow to replace them. Clip any dead or dying leaves and traps to keep it looking nice. Do not feed the traps hamburger! This will only kill the trap. An occasional triggering of a trap without an insect to watch it close is no big deal, but do not continually just trigger the traps! This will only weaken the plant.

All of my fly traps have been grown in full sun right here in Rhode Island for over 20 years.

Venus flytrap *Dionaea muscipula*

