

REEMS CREEK NURSERY

Dionaea muscipula

Venus Flytrap

A Garden Guide

Venus Flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) is a carnivorous plant native to subtropical wetlands on the east coast of the U.S., primarily in North and South Carolina, although they have been introduced to Florida, coastal New Jersey, and other areas. It is an endangered species, and cannot be legally collected from the wild.



Their native habitat is warm and humid in the summer, and chilly to frosty in the winter. As a result, a period of dormancy of two to three months is absolutely essential in the winter. During this time, your pet Venus Flytrap should be removed to a cool location in a temperature range of 32 to 50 degrees, and allowed to rest. They will naturally lose leaves and traps through this period. Old or black leaves should be cut back. Just remember they are not dying, they're just resting, and if not allowed to rest, they will exhaust their energy and die. New vigorous growth will resume in the spring. The life span in captivity is usually 7 to 10 years. Reproduction is by seed produced in small white flowers in the spring. Mature plants will also produce bulbs that can be divided.

Care: Venus Flytraps grow best in sunny (6-8 hours of direct sunlight) to partially sunny conditions (4-6 hours of direct sunlight). Very few other plants are happy in the nutrient-poor natural environment of these plants, so their habitat tends to be open and sunny. They do engage in some photosynthesis but primarily use their unique and unconventional method of obtaining nutrients by trapping and digesting insects.

Watering: To grow healthy carnivorous plants it is important to keep the soil wet at all times. The best way to do this is to keep plants in a tray or saucer that is filled with water as needed. While they like to be damp, they do not like to be immersed in water above the soil line. Always use mineral free water. Rain water or distilled water is fine, but avoid bottled water, well water, or tap water.



Fertilizing: Carnivorous plants do not like to be fertilized, and the minerals in tap water can over fertilize and “burn” the plants. In a pinch tap water can be used, but a steady diet of tap water, well water, or spring water is detrimental, and ultimately fatal. If repotting, do not use potting soil or anything with fertilizer. Peat sometimes with the addition of a little sand is the recommended media. The peat will keep the pH in the desired 5.0 range.

As a general rule, Venus Flytraps do not need to be fed. Placing them outside on a deck or porch in warmer weather will allow them natural access to insect prey. Even kept indoors, you might be surprised by how many creepy crawlies they can collect. If you want to feed them by hand, it is best to use tweezers so that the plants’ delicate membranes and mechanisms won’t be damaged. Please remember, each trap is only capable of closing 3 or 4 times before it dies, so playing by poking them artificially with something to close them is not recommended.

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