

# Carnivorous Plants

These amazing and fascinating plants are surprisingly hardy and fun to grow. Carnivorous plants hardy in the Pacific Northwest include all species and hybrids of Pitcher Plants (*Sarracenia* spp.), the Cobra Lily (*Darlingtonia californica*), the Venus Fly Trap (*Dionaea muscipula*) and many species of Sundews (*Drosera* spp.) and Butterworts (*Pinguicula* spp.) Tropical Pitcher Plants (*Nepenthes* spp.) are not Winter hardy outdoors but can be grown indoors under bright fluorescent lights.

## **OUTDOOR CULTURE:**

### **Exposure:**

Full sun to partial shade is acceptable, but these plants respond directly to the amount of warmth they receive.

### **Soils and Potting:**

They can be grown in containers with a 50:50 soil mix of peat moss and coarse sand. Traditional potting soil is not recommended due to the lime and fertilizers found in most soil mixes. Hardy carnivorous plants may be planted in natural or artificial bogs. Pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* var) are hardy in our area, and can be mulched with straw for protection from cold weather. All varieties of carnivorous plants will benefit from being put outside during the spring and summer. Remember to gradually condition them to outdoor conditions and remember to bring them in or protect them in the Fall.

### **Watering:**

All of these plants can be grown outdoors in pots left sitting in a couple inches of water—never over the crowns. These plants cannot tolerate any fertilizer. If your water is hard (high in mineral content) you should use rain water or distilled water.

### **Winter Protection:**

Before severe freezing weather in the fall, remove the plants from their water environment and group the plants together in a sheltered place or bury the pots into the soil. Plants in the ground should have their crowns covered with several inches of loose leaves, straw or fir boughs. They may also be overwintered in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse.

## **INDOOR CULTURE:**

Most species of carnivorous plants may be grown as house plants in a sunny window or under fluorescent grow lights. The tropical species will keep growing year round while temperate types often show a partial or complete winter dormancy. Plants grown indoors must sit in water year round. Do a complete water change every few weeks to prevent salt build up. **Do not fertilize carnivorous plants.** They are adapted to grow with few nutrients and a shot of commercial fertilizer, no matter how well intentioned, will quickly kill the plants.

### **Additional Reading:**

<https://www.usbg.gov/gardens-plants/cultivating-carnivorous-plants>

