

Venus Flytrap

Dionaea muscipula

The most popular carnivorous plant, Venus flytraps grow to 5-6 inches in diameter with traps typically measuring up to 1.5 inches. In late spring, Venus flytraps produce small white flowers that readily self-pollinate. In mid to late summer, you can collect seeds once the entire stalk turns completely black and dries up. Native to a 90-mile radius around Wilmington, NC.

USDA Zone: 8



Where to Grow

The flytrap grows best outdoors as a container or potted plant. It makes an excellent addition to any sunny deck or patio. You may also grow it in a pond or fountain, but keep the crown of the plant above water. Because of its specific soil requirements, avoid planting it directly into the ground, unless you have created a specific type of bog garden.

Sunlight

During the growing season, grow your flytrap outside in full sun. Provide 6 or more hours of direct sunlight for vigorous growth. If full sun is not possible, provide a minimum of 4 hours of direct sunlight with bright indirect light during the rest of the day. Your plant won't be as vibrant or sturdy as one grown in full sun, but you will be able to maintain its overall health.

Heat Tolerance

The flytrap tolerates the summer heat well. It originates from an area where temperatures above 90°F commonly occur in summer. However, in its native habitat, the soil temperature is moderated by a slow seepage of cool spring water. When growing your flytrap in containers, you will need to pay attention to soil temperature. While it may not be necessary to shade your plant during the hottest parts of summer, you may need to top water your plants daily to prevent the roots from over-heating. Plants will over heat when the soil temperature approaches 110°F. Monitor soil temperature whenever the daytime temperature rises above 100°F.

Water

Keep the pot in standing water at all times. Never allow the soil to dry out completely. The flytrap requires mineral-free water. So bottled distilled water, water passed through a reverse-osmosis unit or collected rain water are best. If you grow your plant in a pond or fountain, keep the water level no higher than halfway up the pot. Avoid drowning the crown of the plant.

Winter Care

As winter approaches, your plant will slow down in growth and eventually stop growing. It'll retain some of its leaves throughout the winter months, but the leaves will turn brown around the edges and the traps will stop working. This is perfectly normal. Flytraps require 3-4 months of winter dormancy triggered by cold temperatures (below 50°F) and shorter daylight hours. Even while dormant, your plant will still need to sit in a small amount of standing water to prevent its soil from drying out.

However, plants are very susceptible to freeze damage when grown in containers. You will need to protect your plant when the temperature falls below 20°F or whenever there is a combination of freezing temperatures and wind. Both types of winter conditions can certainly cause serious frost burn. To prevent frost burn, cover it with black plastic or a tarp, or move it into an unheated garage or shed.

As soon as the freeze is over and the temperature climbs above 35°F, uncover your plant and allow it to continue its dormancy outdoors.

Early Spring Care

When the temperature slowly creeps up and daylight hours become longer, your plants will gradually emerge from dormancy. Clip off all leaves from the previous year to make way for flower buds and new leaf growth. Look for flowers in late spring.

Indoor Care

Because of sun requirements and winter dormancy, we do not recommend growing flytraps indoors, including terrariums. They grow best outdoors as container plants or in bog gardens.

Feeding

Although some growers like to feed their flytrap, it is not necessary. Carnivorous plants have adapted to capturing insects on their own, and insects will naturally be attracted to your plant. If you choose to feed your plant, use recently killed insects. Do not feed your plant meat. Feeding is not at all required during the winter months when the plant is dormant. Because there is already an abundance of insects outdoors, it's not necessary to supplement with foliar sprays.

Soil

The flytrap requires nutrient-free soil that provides good drainage and aeration. Use a standard soil mixture of 1 part peat moss and 1 part perlite. Never use potting soil, compost or fertilizer. These ingredients will kill your plant.

Repotting

For a robust plant, repot it every year. Change the soil, and if necessary, put your plant in a larger pot. Changing the soil restores soil acidity, improves root aeration and strengthens the health of your plants. Repot during late winter and early spring, especially if you want really robust plants in time for summer. In general, however, you can repot your plants at any time of the year. If you choose to repot at a time other than early spring, make sure you keep the roots intact.

When changing pots, use a tall one that will easily accommodate its long root system. Flytraps tend to grow faster and larger when their roots have room to grow. Large pots will also give your plants added protection during the winter.

