

Midtown Carnivores

Plant Care Sheet Feeding Your Carnivorous Plant

<http://www.midtowncarnivores.com>

Carnivorous Plants **DO NOT REQUIRE** feeding. As plants, they get their energy from photosynthesis like any other plant, so all they really need to survive is light and water. However, insect carnivory serves as their version of using fertilizer. So, **must** you feed your plant? **NO**. But if you **do**, and if you do it correctly, **your plant will grow more vigorously**.



OUTDOOR PLANTS: **Outdoor** plants don't need to be fed. You'll quickly see that they're adept at catching its own food.

DIONAEA: Venus Flytraps consume live food. The movement of a live insect inside a closed trap tells the plant that it has captured prey rather than debris. If you put non-live food into the trap, it may simply open up the next day without digesting. First, catch a live insect or buy a small cricket from a pet store. The prey should be no more than 2/3 the length of the trap. [Optional: Place the insect in a small, closed plastic sandwich/Ziploc bag and place the bag in the refrigerator or freezer long enough for the insect to stop moving/pass out from the cold, but not long enough to kill it.] Grasp the insect with tweezers. Brush it back and forth along the inner surface of the trap and its trigger hairs until it closes. Then release your hold on the insect and pull your tweezers gently out of the closed trap. The insect will [warm up and] move around inside the trap, causing it to gradually close tighter. The trap leaf will digest the insect and re-open about a week later, leaving behind the insect's shell. (Removing the shell is optional.) [Feeding VFTs freeze-dried bloodworms is possible but in some ways more difficult. If using non-live food, you will need to "massage" the closed trap over time to trick it into believing that its prey is alive.] Feed just one trap-leaf of the plant every week or two. If the traps are not closing quickly, this is sign of either overly frequent feeding or insufficient light in your growing conditions.

NEPENTHES, SARRACENIA: Pitcher plants are the easiest to feed. You can use tweezers to drop either live insects or freeze-dried bloodworms directly into the pitcher. Be certain that the food is small enough to easily fall to the bottom of the pitcher. For Nepenthes, feed one pitcher of the plant every week or two. For Sarracenia, feed each pitcher of the plant up to once per week. If you start seeing dry, brown patches along the outside of the pitcher tube, reduce the feeding frequency. For Nepenthes, feed one pitcher of the plant once every week or two.

DROSERA: Sundews can be fed either live or dead caught insects, freeze-dried bloodworms or small fish food flakes. Small crickets may also be used, but if alive, their legs and arms should be removed to prevent escape. Place the food directly on the tentacled leaf surface. Feed one to two leaves of the sundew every week or two.

PYGMY DROSERA: Pygmy sundews can be fed either live or dead fruit flies, freeze-dried bloodworms or fish food flakes. Use tweezers to pick up a tiny morsel of food and place it directly on the tentacled leaf surface. The piece of food should ideally be no more than 1½ times the size of the leaf being fed. Feed one to two leaves of each plant every week or two.

PINGUICULA: Tropical sundews can be fed either live or dead caught insects, freeze-dried bloodworms or small fish food flakes. Small crickets may also be used, but if alive, their legs and arms should be removed to prevent escape. Place the food directly on the tentacled leaf surface. Feed one to two leaves of the sundew every week or two.

For any questions, please contact us at any time:



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