

Raising your own

I'D RATHER
YOU WOULDN'T!

VENUS FLY TRAP

DIONAEA MUSCIPULA

GERMINATING YOUR VENUS FLY TRAP SEEDS

1 Your growing kit includes everything you need to start your very own Venus Fly Trap from seed. The first step in this process is to remove the contents of your growing kit and take the clear top cap off of your "mini-greenhouse."

2 Next, empty your bag of soil into the mini-greenhouse. (The black cap is the bottom.) NOTE: Set aside the plastic dish included with your growing kit – you'll need it later.

3 Now, thoroughly saturate the soil using **DISTILLED, DEIONIZED, OR RAIN WATER ONLY** (Venus Fly Traps cannot tolerate tap water). Soaking the soil can take some time, as it is comprised mainly of peat moss, which requires a bit of coaxing to gain absorbency.

4 It's time to sow your seeds! Very carefully, open your bag of tiny, shiny black seeds. Gently, pour them onto the TOP of your moistened soil. To germinate, Venus Fly Trap seeds must have good contact with damp soil, but they should **NOT** be

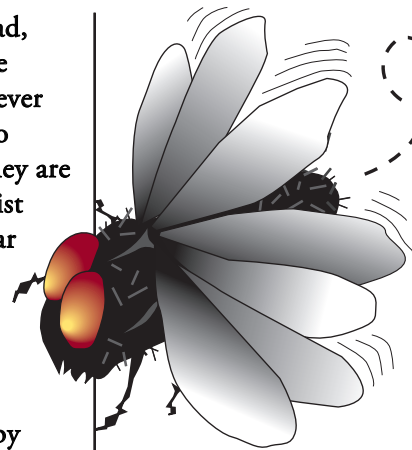


buried. Instead, simply pat the seeds down (ever so slightly) to make sure they are well ensconced on the soil's moist surface. Finally, replace the clear top cap back onto your nifty mini-greenhouse.

5 Now, you are going to create a short, artificial "winter" for you seeds by storing them in your refrigerator for **SIX WEEKS**. This process is called cold stratification, and it prepares your seeds to germinate and grow!

6 After this six-week "winter," take your mini-greenhouse out of the fridge, and place it into the dish you set aside in step #2 (or onto a saucer). Unlike most plants, Venus Fly Traps must be watered from the bottom-up only. Create a watering reservoir for your plant by filling the dish or saucer on which it sits with distilled water. Water will be drawn up into the plant, leaving you only to refill the reservoir as needed.

7 Next, find a bright, sunny location, such as a nice windowsill, where your seeds can sit for a few weeks, undisturbed.



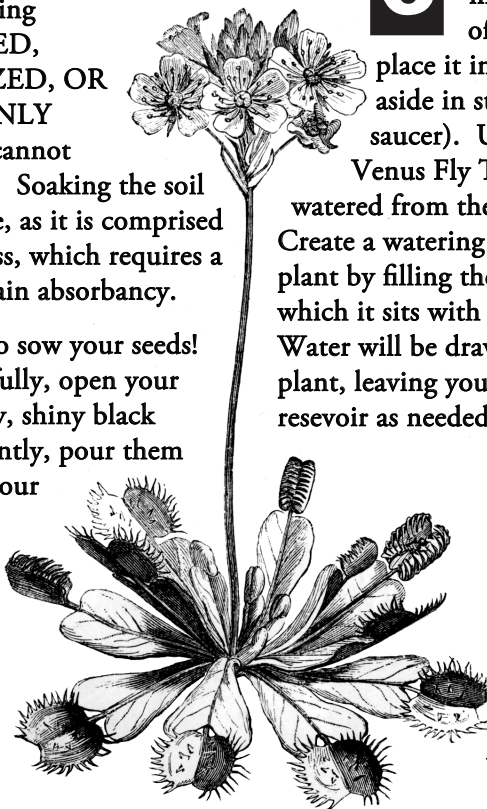
Warmth is essential during this time, but extreme heat should be avoided.

8 Now it's time to

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT for nature to take its course. Venus Fly Traps may require more than 8 weeks to germinate, so be patient! When your seeds sprout, remove the top cap from your mini-greenhouse to provide ventilation.

THROUGH THE SEASONS...

The Venus Fly Trap begins its growth cycle each spring by sending out a rosette of small leaves, followed by a stalk with flowers. By summer, the Venus Fly Trap is producing its largest leaves and is in its most upright and active form, thriving on warm temperatures (80° to 95°F) and high humidity. This is the season the plant requires the most moisture and nutrients. As autumn approaches, the plant slows down, returning to a more compact, low-lying profile. Dormancy follows in the winter, with leaves dying back to ground-level, often turning black, and the plant appearing dead. During dormancy, the Venus Fly Trap can tolerate colder temperatures – even below freezing.



THE *amazing* VENUS FLY TRAP

A FREAKISH MARVEL OF THE NATURAL WORLD!

Since time immemorial, humankind has been fascinated with the idea of carnivorous plants, imagining giant man-eaters in distant jungles waiting to devour hapless natives who get too close. CHOMP!

Fortunately, this is merely the stuff of legends and fantasy. As far as modern science is aware, man-eating plants do not exist.

However, in a not-too-distant land, there lives a voracious carnivore almost as fantastic - the Venus Fly Trap (*Dionaea muscipula*).

Native only to misty bogs and savannahs in a small, 100-square mile area straddling North and South Carolina, the Venus Fly Trap has adapted an amazing ability to lure living prey into its hair-trigger traps, which snap shut, leaving the victim to be digested alive!

Luckily, the Venus Fly Trap only grows to about 8" across with traps under 2" long - no threat to any mammal, but definitely deadly to flies, gnats and many other small, ugly insects.

ANATOMY OF A KILLER . . .

Imagine the challenge of catching prey on the wing when you're rooted in one place all your life! Venus

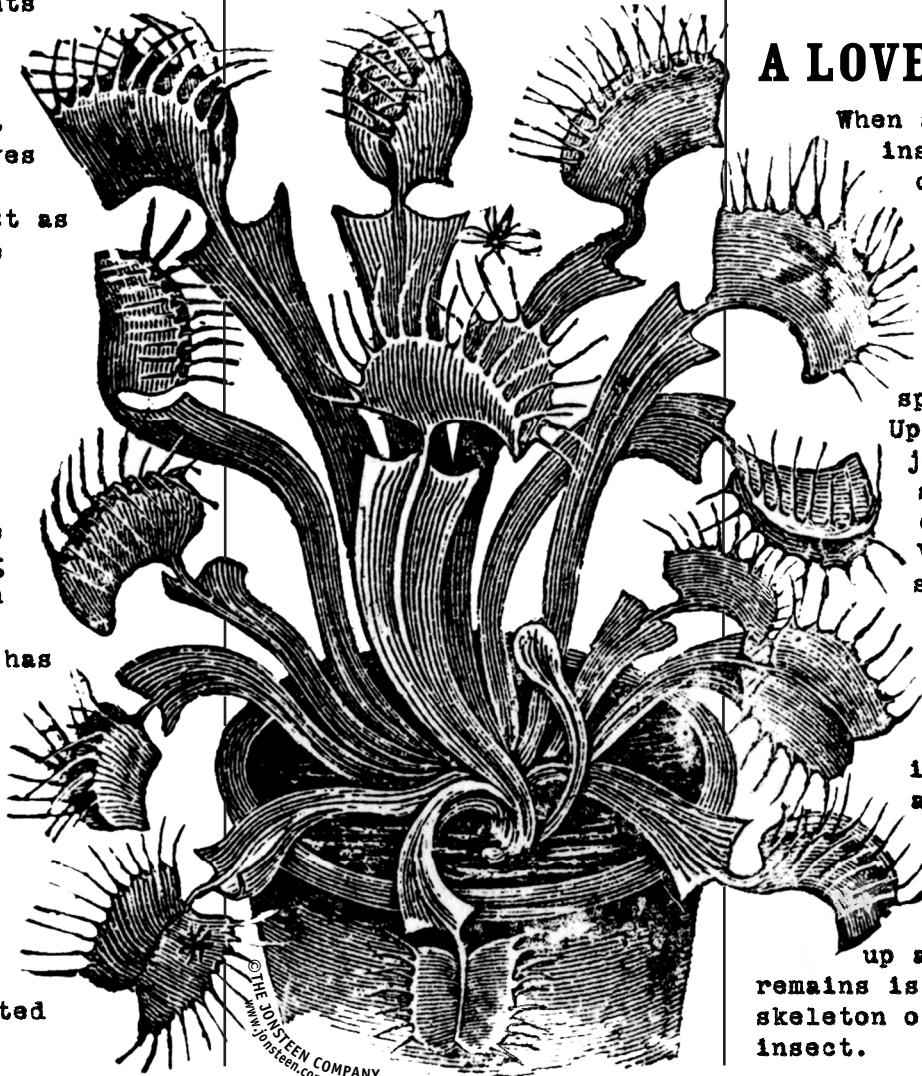
Fly traps have turned this challenge into a lethal artform through their highly specialized anatomy. The Venus Fly Trap has heart-shaped leaf stems (petioles) which end in "traps."

These hinged traps are really the plant's true leaves, and they are edged with bristle-like "cilia," as well as a sticky nectar which insects find irresistibly delicious. Inside the traps are 3 to 8 tiny trigger hairs.



A LOVELY MEAL!

When an unsuspecting insect touches one of these trigger hairs twice - or two of the hairs at once - the trap snaps shut, engulfing the quarry in a split second. Upon sensing a juicy bug struggling in one of its traps, the Venus Fly Trap seals that trap completely and, well, dinner begins! Digestive enzymes flow into the trap, and in 7 to 10 days the plant's immovable feast is over. When the trap opens up again, all that remains is the creepy skeleton of the late insect.



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