

Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*)



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Introduction

The Venus flytrap is an indigenous species of the United States of America. It grows in forests and can live up to 20 years. It is a carnivorous plant and receives some of the nutrients it requires by catching insects and sometimes small reptiles. Due to over-harvesting from the wild, and loss of natural habitat, the Venus flytrap is listed as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of threatened species 2000.



Description

The Venus flytrap can reach heights of between 8 and twelve inches. It is easily recognisable due to its hinged, jaw-like leaves and its small white flowers. When an insect or small reptile triggers the hairs on the open leaves, they snap shut, trapping the food source within. The lifespan of the Venus flytrap is approximately 20 years.

Habitat

The Venus flytrap is native to North and South Carolina in the United States. Although it can be kept as a houseplant, it prefers damp forest soil and bright sunshine. The Venus flytrap does not require a nutrient rich soil as it can subsidise its diet with insects.

Diet

The Venus flytrap is carnivorous and can devour an insect in three to five days; however, it can survive for months without a meal. Each trap can only open and close a few times before it dies and is replaced. When kept as a houseplant, it requires a diet of mealworm or bloodworm.