



© Noah Elhardt - CC-BY-SA-2.5 - <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>



H. Zell - CC-BY-SA-3.0 - <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-3.0/>



Sanjay Acharya - CC-BY-SA-3.0 - <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-3.0/>

12705

Venus - Fliegenfalle

Venus Fly Trap

Dionaea muscipula

The capture mechanism of the *Dionaea muscipula* is with a speed of up to 100 milliseconds one of the fastest movements ever in plants. The red colour of the lamina attracts the prey. The edge of the leaf blade has side bristles while the center of the two halves of the leaf usually presents three hair-thin sensitive bristles. As soon as an insect touches one of the sensitive bristles repeatedly or different bristles in a row, the trap snaps shut with the two halves of the leaf closing like a leghold trap with an enormous speed of 6 to 20 cm per second. Because of the long side bristles it is impossible for the insects to escape. Small glands starting now to produce a digestive enzyme that decomposes the prey and helps absorbing the nutrients. Only indigestible parts like the chitinous exoskeleton remain. The digestion takes up to ten days depending on the size of the prey. After that, the trap opens up again for its next catch.

Natural location: The Venus Fly Trap has its only natural habitat in the US states of North and South Carolina, where it grows exclusively in swamps, mainly in an area of about 100 km around the town of Wilmington. The collection of its seeds is allowed only for people with a permit.

Cultivation: Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you should keep the seeds sealed in a plastic bag in the freezer of your refrigerator for about two days. As a light germinator the seeds of the Venus Fly Trap can simply be spread on moist potting compost without putting any compost earth on top. Cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out, but don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 25°C and 30° Celsius (for instance near a heater) and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Usually it takes about four to six weeks until germination.

Place: For your *Dionaea muscipula* is a bright and full sunny place ideal.

Care: The Venus Fly Trap needs either raised bog peat or customary carnivore soil for cultivation. Since it is a marsh plant, constant watering is required. It is best to keep the plant on a saucer which should always be filled with lime-deficient water. Contrary to the popular opinion, the insects are not the food of the Venus Fly Trap, but fertilizer for the plant that can be stored up to one year. That is why fertilizing is not necessary and rather destructive for cultivation.

During the winter: Keep the plant in a bright and cool place with a temperature between 4° and 12° Celsius. During hibernation all the traps might die, but it will sprout again in spring. Keep watering the plant, but in moderate amounts.

© www.saflax.de