

Collectors Corner Fact Sheet

Sundews



Sundews (*Drosera*) are the largest genera of carnivorous plants with over 160 species being found in every continent on earth except Antarctica. They are commonly found in areas of very poor nutrient hence the ability to supplement their diet with insects. *Droseras* are the most common form of insect eating plant often covering large areas where soil is moist. Sundews are perennial and can be kept many years, they are fast growing and flower prolifically..

Description

All sundew form short hairs along the leaf surface that develop droplets of sticky dew in moist environments, plants often look best in the cool mornings, droplets can almost dry out in hot weather. Sundews vary dramatically

between species with some growing all years while others may only grow in the cooler months and others in summer. Some form corms below ground to allow them to become dormant in the dry summer months.

Position

Sundews need a reasonable amount of sunlight to grow and form healthy leaves so any sunny wind protected area will do well. Indoors they require a cooler sunny window, outdoors partial cover. They have been grow very well under artificial lights indoors. Avoid strong draughty positions.

Watering

The potting media must be kept moist to wet throughout the whole year period. Watering can be reduced during the winter as plants will not dry out easily. If temperatures are high, it is very important to keep the media wet otherwise the new growth may suffer and distort or die. Stand the pot in a wide saucer or tray of water up to 2.5 cm deep (less in winter). It is preferable to use rain or distilled water. If using tap water it is necessary to rinse the soil and water tray every month or so to prevent a build up of salts.

Dormancy Period

Most Sundew species either become dormant in winter or slow down growth. Some winter species will begin to grow once the cold has set in, these forms will generally go back to dormancy by late Spring. Their growth cycle is governed by their natural growing areas so areas that remain wet in winter and spring but dry in summer will have summer dormant plants. Some species appear to be annual as they die off each year in summer, these species can be grown many years in collections.

Repotting

Sundews cannot be grown in soils or regular potting mixes, the most popular media is a mixture of peat moss (60%) and propagating (coarse) sand (40%), sphagnum moss is also used by some growers. The media must not contain material that will decompose. Plants may be repotted at any time of the year but best during the plants dormant cycle. The best period is before growth starts otherwise some damage will occur. Sundews obtain their own fertilizers by catching insects, a supplementary liquid Fertiliser will also help from September to March but should not be used at more than 10% of recommended rate.

Reproduction

Sundews can reproduce in a range of methods, the most common is seed which occurs soon after flowering, these seed will quickly start new plants around the older plants. Some species produce asexual Gemmae which are small growths produced by some species that will create new plants. Some species produce new plants from root systems and many can be reproduced by cutting and planting healthy leaves.

Pests & Diseases

Sundews suffer from very few diseases but may rot if grown under adverse conditions. Insect pests like scale, mealy bug and aphids can distort growth and weaken the plant. Manual removal of aphids and scale may be sufficient but there are several insecticides available which may be applied manufacturer's instructions, and use with care.

**Good Growing
Collectors Corner**



D capensis leaf showing sticky droplets



D lanata, rare species