Venus fly-traps are remarkable plants made up of two parts: the stem (or body) and the lamina (leaf-blade) which is the part with “teeth” that captures prey. These “teeth” are actually trigger hairs that sense movement and tell the flytrap when to close. As far as feeding, did you know that a trap only requires a few insects a year?

**PLANTING**

Venus fly-traps have fairly long roots and need deep pots with around 4” or 5” of root growth space. Their roots are sensitive to temperature change, so an insulated pot works best. You can also use a terrarium, a bucket, an old aquarium or a large glass goldfish bowl – just as long as the roots have space to grow.

Flytraps enjoy high humidity and moist, poor, acidic soil – such as equal parts peat moss and perlite. Or, five parts peat moss, three parts silica sand, and two parts perlite. Do not use regular potting soil, as it can kill the plant.

**LIGHT**

Flytraps like full sun, and during the growing period, they need 12 hours of light to properly photosynthesize. At least four of those hours should be direct sunlight. If you grow your plant indoors, put it in an east, west, or south-facing window. Or, use a “plant light” or fluorescent light close by. It will also enjoy being outdoors in full sun.

**WATER**

Use distilled or filtered water, as tap water can contain elements harmful to the plant. During growing season, plant soil should never be completely dry. Keep it moist, but not soggy. You can water it one of two ways:

- Place pot with drainage holes in a tray filled with water so growing medium can absorb the water. If pot is too shallow, this method could promote fungus by keeping roots too close to the water.
- Pour water onto the top of soil and let it drain out pot bottom. Keep it moist, but not soggy.

**FEEDING**

DO NOT fertilize your flytrap or use soil like Miracle-Grow® as it can burn the roots. These plants get most of their nutrients from photosynthesis. They may also catch insects and occasionally small animals like frogs. The trap doesn’t seal unless the item it has caught is moving. This means that you should feed your trap live prey like flies and mealworms. Only feed one or two of your traps at a time, and only when the plant is healthy and strong. DO NOT feed your plant human foods (like raw meat) as it can kill the plant.

**GROOMING**

As they mature, the traps will turn black. Simply cut them off and new traps will appear in about six weeks. You should also be aware that Venus flytrap leaves tend to die off in bunches.
DORMANCY

In order for Venus Flytraps to survive long term, they must have a dormancy period every year that lasts three to five months. A dormant Venus Fly Trap isn't very pretty, and many people think it is dying during this period.

During dormancy, the light and water needs for the Venus Fly Trap change. Flytraps should receive a reduction in water to help prevent mold. The media should never dry out completely, but plants shouldn't be kept extremely wet either.

Method 1: If you live a hardiness zone between 4 and 7, it is possible to winter your Venus Fly Traps outdoors, but they will need to be planted in the ground in a bog garden or other soil that is good for carnivorous plants. Pots are too susceptible the surrounding air temperature and will not offer enough protection for the plants throughout the winter. In addition to being in the ground, plants should either be mulched or covered with leaves to be more protected from the inclement weather.

A cool windowsill or unheated porch or garage

Method 2: This is the best method if you are unable to winter your plants outside. If possible, put the plants in a south facing window of an unheated porch or garage that doesn't freeze. If the plant is receiving sun during its dormancy, then it can still perform photosynthesis and this will help keep the plant healthy. Also, since the plant is still receiving sun daily, it will know when to come out of dormancy as the photoperiod starts to extend as spring arrives.

The refrigerator method

Method 3: Use this method as a last resort. If you don't have any other option for a place to winter your plants, you will have to "force" the Venus Fly Traps into dormancy. Ideally, you would decrease the photoperiod over time along with decreasing the temperature in order to send the plant proper signals to start preparing for dormancy. Too sudden a change in photoperiod or temperature might actually kill your Venus Flytrap.

gently remove the Venus Fly Trap from its pot and dip the plant and soil in distilled water (or other pure water) and swirl it around to remove all of the media from its roots. When you have the entire white rhizome exposed and roots that are free of all soil, remove any parts of the plant that appear to be dead. Cut off all the leaves and traps, and treat entire plant with a fungicide by either dipping or misting it. Now, wrap up the Venus Fly Trap in a damp paper towel or sphagnum peat moss. Place the plant in a zip lock plastic bag that has had the air squeezed out of it. put the bag in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator. Check in on the plant every week or so throughout the dormancy to ensure that it isn't rotting or suffering a fungal attack.

The Venus Fly Traps and their pots should be put into plastic bags and placed into the refrigerator for the 3 to 5 months. Obviously this takes up quite a bit of space in the fridge, so for that reason alone, it may want to be avoided. Also, Venus Fly Traps that are wintered this way are very susceptible to mold and other disease, so you will definitely want to use a light dusting of fungicide powder or protect the plants from mold in some other way. This is a must. You will also want to check in on the plants at least every couple of weeks throughout the 3 months or so that you leave them in the fridge to ensure that they aren't molding.

Once dormancy is over (around March), remove the plant from refrigerator and repot in appropriate medium. Place pot in a tray of water and in a window with good sunlight.