

For Immediate Release
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Carnivores Are Subject of New Botanical Garden Exhibit In the Bourke-Sullivan Display House

Contrary to what some may believe, meat-eating plants were not the brainchild of creators of the 1960s sitcom, *The Addams Family*. They do exist and some are on display at The New York Botanical Garden in an exhibit both adults and children can really sink their teeth into.

A beguiling display of Venus flytraps, sundews, butterworts, and pitcher plants, like *Sarracenia* and *Nepenthes*, which derive their nutrition from insects they trap and devour, is the focus of the fall horticultural exhibit in the Bourke-Sullivan Display House at the Botanical Garden's Nolen Greenhouses for Living Collections. *Carnivores: Plants That Eat Meat* runs through October 30, 2005.

Tricks and Traps

Carnivorous plants have many different mechanisms for luring and trapping their prey. Pitcher plants have cylinder-shaped leaves. Insects that are attracted to their patterned leaves or nectar fall into the pitchers and drown in collected rainwater or die when they can't crawl out. Sundews have leaves with sticky hairs that hold an insect tight and curl around to digest it. Butterworts are like glue traps: their smooth, sticky leaves hold insects until they die and can be digested. Venus flytraps have leaves that snap shut around insects. Bladderworts have tiny trap-door bladders that open, suck in tiny insects, and snap shut behind them.

Once the prey, usually insects but sometimes other very small animals, are trapped by these leaves and die, they are digested by enzymes secreted by the traps, by bacteria present in the traps, or a combination of both. This digestion makes nutrients from the insects' bodies available to the plant. Like all green plants, carnivorous plants make their own food, but in the difficult habitats in which carnivorous plants live, they need the extra nutrients provided by the insect carcasses to survive and thrive.

Small Exhibit with a Big Bite

The site of the *Carnivores* exhibit, the Bourke-Sullivan Display House, a more intimate setting than the larger galleries in the Botanical Garden's Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, is appropriately scaled to display these intriguing plants, which are in a setting of anthuriums, ferns, and other lush tropical plants. *Carnivores: Plants That Eat Meat* is the second in a program of changing exhibits in this new venue that are timed to the featured plants' natural growth and flowering cycles.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road in the Bronx. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday-Sunday and on Monday holidays, from 10 a.m. -6 p.m. April-October, and 10 a.m.-5p.m. November-March. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *Combination Ticket* that includes grounds admission, the Conservatory, Rock Garden, Native Plant Garden, Tram Tour, and Everett Children's Adventure Garden. Grounds admission is free to everyone all day Wednesdays and on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. To purchase tickets, call 800.965.4827 or order online at www.nybg.org. For other information, call 718.817.8700.

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