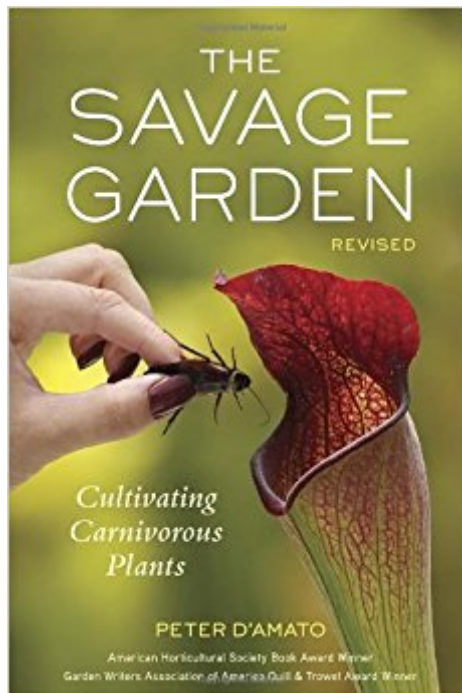




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# **The Savage Garden, Revised: Cultivating Carnivorous Plants**



## Synopsis

For fifteen years, *The Savage Garden* has been the number one bestselling bible for those interested in growing carnivorous plants. This new edition is fully revised to include the latest developments and discoveries in the carnivorous plant world, making it the most accurate and up to date book of its kind. You may be familiar with the Venus flytrap, but did you know that some pitcher plants can—and do—digest an entire rat? Or that there are several hundred species of carnivorous plants on our planet? Beautiful, unusual, and surprisingly easy to grow, flesh-eating plants thrive everywhere from windowsills to outdoor container gardens, in a wide variety of climates. The Savage Garden is the most comprehensive guide to these fascinating oddities, gloriously illustrated with more than 200 color photos. Fully revised with the latest developments in the carnivorous plant world, this new edition includes: All the basics—from watering and feeding to modern advances in artificial lighting, soil, and fertilizers. Detailed descriptions of hundreds of plants, including many of the incredible new species that have been recently discovered and hybridized. Cultivation and propagation information for all the plant families: pitcher plants, Venus flytraps, sundews, rainbow plants, bladderworts, and many other peculiar plants from the demented mind of Mother Nature. Whether you're a beginner with your first flytrap or an expert looking for the latest exotic specimen, this classic book has everything you need to grow your very own little garden of horrors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

PETER D'AMATO has been growing carnivorous plants for nearly forty years and his nursery, California Carnivores (CaliforniaCarnivores.com), houses the world's largest collection of carnivorous plants. D'Amato is cofounder of the Bay Area Carnivorous Plant Society and he lectures on the subject nationwide.

Preface    I find it ironic that this introduction to the revised edition of *The Savage Garden* is the final section of the book I am completing, only one week after returning from the 2012 International Carnivorous Plant Society (ICPS) conference hosted by the New England Carnivorous Plant Society. I had a wonderful time at the conference, and in a presentation I gave, I briefly told the audience some details of this new edition. The irony is that at the very first world conference of the ICPS, held at the Atlanta Botanical Garden in 1997, I gave a slide show preview of the first edition of the book. Little did I truly comprehend at the time the potential impact of the book. It won the American Horticultural Society's book award in 1999 and became a best seller in the genre, and only two weekends ago in New England I autographed dozens of copies for attendees of the conference. Nearly all of the books were well worn, well read, many with colorful bits of paper bookmarking sections of the book important to the reader—well, I was humbled and pleased. *The Savage Garden* was not just a coffee table book of pretty pictures, but a resource that people actually read for the helpful information it contained. It was the type of book I wish had existed when I was a kid in the late 1960s, when carnivorous plants first took hold of my life, yet information on them—especially how to grow them—was sorely lacking. There have been many ICPS conferences since 1997 all over the world, from Japan to Australia, from Europe to North America. The one this past month in New England was startling not only for the amazing show of fantastically beautiful carnivorous plants on display and for sale, but also for the delightful variety of people attending. Adults and kids, men and women, boys and girls—things have certainly changed since I was a teenager—when you could count on one hand the serious growers of carnivorous plants in the United States. Since then, thousands of people all over the world have found the hobby an intoxicating experience. Carnivorous plants are educational, sometimes challenging, utterly and strangely beautiful, and a lot of fun to grow! Plus, unlike other plants—they don't just sit there!    So how does this revision differ from the first edition? A lot has happened in fifteen years. Most of the cultivation information has remained primarily intact, but I have tweaked and fine-tuned many details learned over the years. Much of this has come from customers of my nursery, California Carnivores, who have done things unimaginable

a decade and a half ago. Other changes came from continual experiments at our nursery, resulting in adjustments to soil recipes, or discovering the cold and freeze tolerance of various subtropical plants. The results were often surprising. Perhaps the greatest changes have occurred in the identification of many of the plants and the astounding numbers of new species discovered and brought into cultivation in the past fifteen years. When I first wrote *The Savage Garden*, for example, most of the varieties of *Sarracenia*, the American pitcher plants, had nicknames only, such as "red tube" or "coppertop" or "okee giant." All of these plants, and many new ones discovered and cultivated since, now have true names (see *Registered Cultivars*, page 357). The vast number of new species that have been discovered and identified is truly amazing. When I first wrote the book, there were five known species of South American sun pitchers (*Heliamphora*). Now, the count is approaching twenty-five! The butterworts (*Pinguicula*) have jumped from seventy species to more than one hundred. And when I first wrote the book there were around eighty species of tropical pitcher plants (*Nepenthes*) known—the count is now approaching one hundred fifty—with many more expected to be discovered as modern-day enthusiasts climb the countless unexplored mountains from the Philippines to New Guinea. More carnivorous plants have been discovered in the last decade than at any time in the past. I have also updated some technological advances, like the invention of polycarbonate greenhouse glazing, which is far superior to fiberglass and glass. Grow light technology has also improved greatly, with far superior artificial lights on the market. We have discovered a new fertilizer that doesn't kill live sphagnum moss, and many new insecticides—some completely natural—that can control bothersome pests with no harm to plants or people. I have also added the metric system to the revision—a tedious effort that nearly drove me insane. Please keep in mind these systems of measurements are rough and approximate! I want to thank my business partner, Damon Collingsworth, for taking on the task of coordinating all the photographs for the book. He took dozens of new photos at our nursery and solicited many others from our friends both near and far. As just one example, the photography of plant autopsies, taken by California Carnivores volunteer Patrick Hollingsworth, is unsurpassed. And the astounding images lent to us by naturalists like Chien Lee, Fernando Rivadavia, Stewart McPherson, Barry Rice, and Andreas Fleischman are certainly compelling and hypnotic. I must end this preface to a book on a topic that has brought so much joy to so many people around the world with a message of sadness and pain. After the recent conference in New England, many of the attendees went on field trips to see carnivorous plants in the wild. They saw local bogs in New England as well as sites in New Jersey, North Carolina, and the Gulf Coast of southeastern North America, where more species of

carnivorous plant genera exist than anywhere else in the world. The excitement of seeing several habitats in protected, pristine beauty was unfortunately overshadowed by one heartbreaking fact: these astounding forms of life are disappearing from our planet at a rate that is beyond alarming. As a few examples, I went to southern New Jersey to see a couple of my favorite sites I knew as a kid growing up on the Jersey shore. Both of these habitats had originally been bogs in the 1800s, but the slow-moving streams had been dammed to create lake reservoirs for drinking water by the early 1900s. Still, there were vast numbers of surviving plants along the edges of the lakes when I was a kid. Apparently, however, the dams were rebuilt in the past decade, and when I saw them a couple of weeks ago, the enormous quantity of sphagnum moss, pitcher plants, and sundews I remembered were virtually all gone, drowned by the higher lake levels the new dams created. And this was in the Pinelands National Reserve, which “protects” an amazing 22 percent of the small and densely populated state of New Jersey. Around Wilmington, North Carolina, we saw some very nice, small sites on Nature Conservancy property that is well managed with controlled burns and protected by a locked gate across the road. However, beyond that, we were left having to hunt for plants along dismal drainage ditches along the sides of roads where occasional patches of Venus flytraps, sundews, and pitcher plants barely survived among broken bottles and discarded fast-food containers. In fact, the most Venus flytraps we saw were in the back yard lawn of a kindly old gentleman who loved and protected the pitcher plants, flytraps, and sundews that survived on the edge of his lakefront property. Originally the area was a vast bog of carnivorous and other rare plants. A few decades ago the creek that drained the bog was dammed, a large lake flooded the bog, and lovely estates were built along the lake. The few plants that survived now grow in grassy lawns, if they are not removed by the homeowner. A simple ditch dug one or two feet (0.3–0.6 m) deep along the edge of a wet carnivorous plant habitat can drain vast areas, killing off all the plants that rely on wet soils. As Mark Todd, our host in Wilmington and member of the North American Sarracenia Conservancy (<http://nasarracenia.org>), told us, “There are just fewer and fewer habitats where the plants are able to grow.” And sadly, this is occurring all around the world. Thankfully, many readers of *The Savage Garden* first encounter the book to find out how to grow a Venus flytrap or pitcher plant they’ve rescued from a local nursery. If this is the case for you, I hope that your initial interest will grow and evolve, leading you to support the various organizations that are trying to save these wonders of nature from extinction.

I purchased the actual book version of this reference a few years ago (signed by the author!), and

am delighted to get it now in eBook form! Bookmarking and highlighting what I need to is a great feature. I have used this book as a total reference for my "carnies" that include a couple of rare sarracenia, a couple of pitchers from Borneo, a couple of VFTs, some sundews, a couple of Mexican butterworts, and even a species of bladderwort! I get all my plants from D'Amato's online store "California Carnivores." I've never had a bit of an issue with them or this book, in either version. From planting medium to light and temperature requirements, to water and fertilization restrictions/requirements, this book will tell you everything you need to know. If you want to get into this hobby a little, make sure you understand what these plants are and what they need by reading this book.

The Positive: A great read for beginners. Far from all-inclusive but certainly all a person needs if they are just starting out or are fairly new to the hobby. With access to forums and Facebook groups, people don't necessarily have to rely on printed books for information on how to grow CPs anymore. I've been growing CPs for over 20 years and I've found many things through trial and error and by asking other growers. Carnivorous plants are a lot easier to grow than people think, and the ideas and inspiration you can get from other growers around this community go far beyond what any book can provide. Having said that if there was one book I'd recommend to people if they absolutely had to have a book or just really wanted one, it would be this one. It covers all the bases quite well.

This book is a must have for anyone considering raising carnivorous plants. A friend loaned me his copy of this book when he heard I was interested in growing some carnivorous plants. It was so full of information and loads of pictures that I had to get a copy for myself. Very in depth and chock-full of information. There are lots of color photos as well. If you are considering raising carnivorous plants, this should be the first purchase you make.

This book deserves a place on every reader AND gardeners bookshelf. Whether you grow CPs already, plan to grow them or are just interested in the Darwin's favorite plants, this book is the one you need to purchase. It contains detailed information on all of the carnivorous plant species, sub-species, hybrids, etc. There are brilliant pictures as well as instructions on how to grow or propagate the plant to accompany the information.

The first edition of this book was and still is THE reference for growing carnivorous plants. There are other better tomes for the academically inclined, but this one will inspire and challenge you to make

growing CP's a lifetime pursuit. This one I bought not because of anything else it brought to the table (though there is new information scattered throughout this revised edition) but out of appreciation for what Peter had contributed to my life in the first one which I purchased in 2003. In the last 11 years, my CP collection has spiraled out of control from a couple of flytraps and sundews in '03 to terrariums scattered all around the house with some CP's (Neps mostly) being grown like common house plants. In retrospect, I wish I had bought the revised edition from California Carnivores (Peter's store) where it is still available autographed by Peter D'Amato. If you even think you might be interested in CP's, this book is for you.

It was recommended to me a few years ago by a serious website on various bog and carnivorous plants. I asked them for a good book as I had had fair to poor luck over years (including setting up peat bog terrariums that were watered with distilled water....) and managed to keep something alive for about 8 months. I finally bought the book and it was well worth it. If you truly want to keep pitchers, sundews and trap plants; this is a good reference. I don't like wasting \$ on print reference so if I give it 5 stars it was worth my money. Hopefully in the spring I will be set up to adopt some specimens and be able to keep them healthy and happy this time.

Never had much luck growing carnivorous plants and the information was scarce and sometimes too much academic. I had to import some books from France to understand a little more about this amazing critters, but it was never quite suffice. This is a great and very interesting book with lots of important information. I wish I had found it earlier. - It would had save me lots of money in plants that died under my clumsy care and in boring books filed with scientific jargon that was in most cases useless in a practical manner to keep the plants alive and thriving. Pages and pages of dissertation about the discussion on how to or why to classify this particular species in this particular group. I call this Book a Manual because there are so much important stuff about how to grow, raise, reproduce, maintain, fertilize and feed Carnivorous Plants that is like a consulting book that stays available to know more and how to solve problems when they arrive with dealing with those amazing unusual plants. But don't get me wrong, No one reads manuals like reading a novel but you will read this book from its first page to the last one. Very well written and very interesting practical information with hundreds of pictures that will clarify your concept of Carnivorous Plants. Loved reading the book and the Author even throws some pieces of humor dealing with technical and scientific stuff. If you want to know about Carnivorous Plants, get this book.

My wife and I picked up our first American pitcher plant *S. leucophylla* 'tarnok' at the UC Botanical Garden, and were nothing short of amazed. We wanted to know more. This book answered every question we could possibly ask in terms of plant care and was incredibly easy to navigate. Our pitcher plant is still thriving, and we have added a *N. ventricosa* to our collection of household pitcher plants in East Bay, CA. All we could ask for is more pictures!

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