

## CARNIVOROUS PITCHER PLANTS

Nepenthes is a genus of carnivorous plants that are also known as tropical picture plants or “monkey cups.” The genus is comprised of approximately 170 species, and numerous natural and cultivated hybrids. The name “monkey cups” refers to the fact that monkeys have been observed drinking from the pitchers of these plants. These plants are native to the Old-World Tropics, or more specifically Southern China, Malaysia, The Philippines, Madagascar and many more. They are typically found in hot, humid, lowland areas but also can be found as tropical alpine plants. Today they are typically sold as an evergreen tropical houseplant. They are very efficient plants and if their cultural needs are met, can indeed catch insects and small prey in captivity. On the retail market, the most common cultivar that is widely sold is *Nepenthes Ventricosa* due to its ease of care and numerous cups. These plants make an excellent addition to any indoor garden.



**Latin Name:** Nepenthes  
**Type:** Evergreen tropical houseplant  
**Soil:** Nutrient poor soil & sphagnum moss  
**Size:** 20”  
**Hardiness:** Zone 11-12, not frost hardy  
**Exposure:** Partial sun  
**Growth Rate:** Moderate  
**Growth Habit:** Mounding and vining

### Where should I plant my nepenthes ventricosa?

*Nepenthes ventricosa* is a variety of nepenthes that is mounding and vining. They appreciate nutrient poor soil or sphagnum moss and perlite to maintain their moisture needs. Their roots are thin and black, and they enjoy moderate aeration. Planting your picture plant in a plastic hanging pot with 40% sphagnum moss is a good choice. These plants also enjoy about 50% humidity with temperatures between 55-95 degrees like the needs of many orchids. They also make an excellent companion plant for orchids.

### How much water will my nepenthes ventricosa need?

*Nepenthes ventricosa* are tropical plants that need consistent moisture to thrive and produce cups. They do not like to dry out completely, much like many other tropical plants. They benefit from moist media and the occasional flooding to wash away any accumulated salts around the roots of the plant. A proper watering schedule should be established based on the size and location of the plant.

### When should I fertilize my nepenthes ventricosa?

Because nepenthes produce carnivorous cups or pitchers, they seldom need to be fertilized. *Nepenthes ventricosa* plants have adapted these traits to survive with very little excess nutrition. If the plant is grown in an area without a source of food for long periods of time, 1/8 of a teaspoon of Miracid may be added to cups, however it is generally unnecessary.

### Are there any pests or diseases I should be aware of?

Generally, *nepenthes ventricosa* plants are unbothered by pests and diseases, however they may suffer from a few common houseplant ailments. They can become susceptible to spider mites, thrips, mealy bugs, or aphids. All these pests can be treated with Neem oil or insecticidal soap.