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Aquatics: Perk Up Sales with Pest Snatchers

Ross Hill



The right supplier. Make sure your supplier is not selling plants collected in the wild! Quality plants come from quality growers. Find a reliable supplier who is passionate about carnivorous plants and knows how to grow them well. Carnivorous plants tend to have smaller root systems and grow slowly compared to other hardy perennials, so it takes time. Your grower should be able to tell you the approximate age of their plants. If their plants were propagated by tissue culture, they should be able to tell you how long they've been rooting.

already assembled in ready-to-retail packaging. Look for packaging that is designed for the health of the plant, yet makes a suitable presentation. Most growers can ship you a case and you can be selling them within a week. If you want to take it to the next step, purchase plants in plugs or small containers and pot them up yourself. You can offer larger plants in individual containers as specimens or build mini bogs of multiple plants. This way, you're selling the container and the plants for a higher ticket at the register. Want to be the premier destination? Build a display bog garden and wow every customer walking in the door.

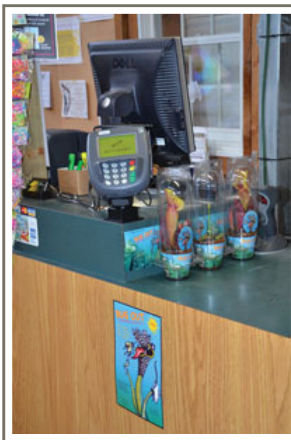
Building the best display. The easiest way to get started right now is to purchase plants packaging that is designed for the health of the ship you a case and you can be selling them these plants in plugs or small containers and pot containers as specimens or build mini bogs of the plants for a higher ticket at the register. Order and wow every customer walking in the

Point-of-purchase display materials. Ask your supplier if they offer display materials ... and be sure to use them! Posters, care sheets, bench tape and “where-to-find” website listings are commonly available for free, and were created for you to use. Have fun building your display and even send a picture back to your supplier to get their input once the display is built.

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Anywhere and everywhere. Experiment with a few different locations within your store to see where the carnivorous plants sell best. Most garden centers will be sure to put some by the register because they do well as impulse purchases. They stand strong as their own freestanding display, but also try some in your aquatics department, tropical house plant area, in the terrarium section, anywhere a child will see it, and—one more time—anywhere a child will see it. Most of us have had an experience with the Venus fly trap when we were younger, as they are “everyone child’s favorite.” They can even be merchandised with cacti and succulents because that customer seems to appreciate non-traditional plants. But be sure that same customer doesn’t confuse them with cactus—these plants need water!

One throat to choke. You will see at least one if not many employees who really light up when they find out you decided to carry carnivorous plants. Make the person with that sparkle in the eye the point person for this category. Put them in charge of tracking the different locations where you merchandise them to see what works and what doesn't. They are also responsible for their plants' care and maintenance, and for making sure you restock when they sell down. The last thing you want to do while figuring out what works best for your store is to spread this

category with nobody responsible for them.

Mark your calendar. Many carnivorous plants are actually hardy perennials. Start the year off by offering them in late winter/early spring to take advantage of Easter traffic. In colder climates they are a neat item with which customers can satisfy their plant cravings while waiting for the warmer weather to come.

Summer is a great time to offer carnivorous plants because they can be merchandised inside or out in various departments. In fall, take the opportunity to tie them into the scary Halloween theme, as well as add them to any agri-tainment or fall festivities that attract kids.

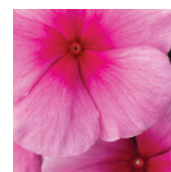
Have fun and be creative. The puns, jokes and taglines are endless with carnivorous plants, so let your marketing folks and employees have fun when creating signage and advertisements. The Bugout branded plants by Aquascape Unlimited uses fun slogans such as "The Pet Without the Vet," "A Carnival of Carnivores," and "They Eat What Bugs Ya." You can be sure kids will "bug" their parents to buy them, so feel free to create little adoption certificates (with your company logo, of course), create contests to guess how many bugs are inside a pitcher plant tube, or have a wall for children to post pictures and updates of their new plant friends. These plants also lend themselves to educational displays as their native habitat is severely under pressure. Bug-eating plants are a sure-fire way to get somebody's attention—after all, you read this far, didn't you? GP

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Features



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