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## African Sundew

*Drosera capensis*

### Enemy of all fruit flies

**Worth Knowing:** Among the carnivores, the African Sundew is an adhesive trap that creates at the tip of the tentacles of its trapping leaves sticky drops with a honey fragrance. This scent is very popular by fruit flies that come to sit on the drops and, of course, get stuck. The tentacles curl inwards after the catch, which takes a couple of hours, while releasing a digestive enzyme that slowly decomposes the fruit flies. Placed in your kitchen the *Drosera capensis* is the ideal plant to divert fruit flies from your fruits.

**Natural Location:** The *Drosera* species can be found in swamp areas of all continents, but most commonly in Australia, South Africa and in the USA.

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you should keep the seeds sealed in a plastic bag in the regular refrigerator for about two days. As a light germinator the seeds of the *Drosera* can simply be spread on moist potting compost without putting any compost earth on top. Cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out, but don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 25°C and 30° Celsius (for instance near a heater) and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Usually it takes about three to seven weeks until germination.

**Place:** The African Sun Dew likes to be kept in a bright and warm place in the sun, so it can develop the intensive red colour of its tentacles.

**Care:** The African Sun Dew needs either raised bog peat or customary carnivore soil for cultivation. Since it is a marsh plant, constant watering is required. It is best to keep the plant on a saucer which should always be filled with lime-deficient water. Contrary to the popular opinion, the fruit flies are not the food of the African Sun Dew, but merely the fertilizer for the plant. That is why fertilizing is not necessary and rather destructive for cultivation. Dead tentacles can simply be ripped off.

**During the winter:** During winter the African Sun Dew likes to be kept in a bright and cooler place, where it still needs a constant watering by filling up the saucer. Often all the tentacles die off until the plant sprouts again next spring.