

Aldrovandra follicularis

Waterwheel Plant

The Waterwheel plant can be relatively straightforward to grow providing the correct cultivation conditions are prepared prior to starting cultivation. There are a number of different techniques available to the grower and these can be found in specialist books or in the **Carnivorous Plant Society Growing Guide for Carnivorous Plants**.



Aldrovandra – Red Form
Photo Allen Lowrie

In general the Waterwheel plant needs to be grown in low nutrient water in an open sunny location. One of the major problems however, is algae growth. This species can be grown outdoors where it will have a chance to enter proper dormancy during the winter.

Water for growing the Waterwheel plant needs to be prepared before introducing your plants. Rather like the cultivation method described for the Bladderworts, a mixture of peat and sand needs to be added to the base of the growing container. Partly decomposed leaf litter also needs to be added to the mix to release tannins, which appear to be a require-

ment of this species. Rainwater should be added and the water allowed to settle until it is slightly tea coloured. At this point Waterwheel plants can be introduced.

Non-invasive oxygenating plants can be added to prevent the water becoming stale and smelly and to help remove nutrients from the water.

In summer the water needs to be maintained in the region of 25°-30°C while in winter it should be allowed to drop to 1-3°C. At the end of the growing season the plant will enter dormancy and will die back to winter resting buds called turions. Some clones are from tropical regions and if kept warm enough will continue to grow all year round. However, in northern Europe it can be a definite challenge to keep *Aldrovandra* healthy during the winter. Low light levels and algal growth are the main problems and it's often easier to simply allow the plant to go dormant instead. If this winter temperature cannot be provided, turions can be removed and placed in water in the refrigerator to undergo the necessary cold period. Be aware that the turions will sink to the bottom of the container and are best removed before this happens as they are extremely well camouflaged!



Aldrovandring - near Mitchell Falls, Kimberley
Western Australia – Photo Allen Lowrie