

Genlisea

The Corkscrew Plant



*Genlisea_subglabra*_Mbala-Kasama Road

Photo—Andreas Fleischmann

Once considered to be only for the experienced grower, there are several species in cultivation which are no more demanding than many commonly cultivated terrestrial Bladderworts.

Genlisea species are all terrestrial plants that grow in soil that is often boggy and waterlogged. They have a unique trapping mechanism that involves a pair of spiral organisms that direct microscopic soil living organisms towards a trapping area. Although the traps are unique and ingenious, the plants are mainly cultivated for their flowers which are borne on delicate scapes. Most Genlisea species are from tropical areas and so if kept constantly warm and supplied with artificial lighting they can be stimulated to flower for most of the year. Other species are considered annual or short-lived perennials and may need to be continued in cultivation by the regular collection and sowing of seed. This is an adaptation to natural periods of drought where the area they grow dry out. Some species however are opportunistic growers and they will continue to grow if conditions remain good for them, usually self-propagating vegetatively.

Genlisea species are best grown in a compost of equal parts by volume peat with perlite or alternatively coir/peat with equal parts lime-free sand. Coir may be a potential alternative or part substitute to peat for Genlisea, but as yet is unproven (see "Growing without Peat" Care Sheet). A terrarium maintained at between 18° and 30° C provides the best conditions for success with these plants though some of the easier species can also be grown successfully in a greenhouse if sufficient warmth is provided in cold periods.

Propagation can be by splitting up existing plants or from seed. If growing from seed bear in mind that many species are from the tropics and being annuals need a long growing season to reach flowering size so the seed should be started as soon as possible in the year and almost certainly in a heated terrarium.

Watering should be by the tray system with pots standing in a few centimetres of water all year round.



Genlisea guianensis - Showing Traps

Photo—Andreas Fleischmann