

SHORT NOTES

GENERAL CULTURAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROWING TUBEROUS DROSERAS

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Although the tuberous droseras come from very varied conditions, they can be nearly all grouped together for common cultivation as long as correct procedures for dormancy and pre-emergence are followed.

There are two main groups of tuberous droseras:

1. Well-drained type: a) Sand forms or drained heavier soils.  
b) Drained laterite soil.
2. The not-so-well-drained type: a) Swamp (wet).  
b) Swamp (drying).

Emergence, I believe, is controlled mainly by temperature although water must be adequate or emergence may be retarded.

Dormancy can be triggered by several factors; maturity through flowering, temperature or water restriction. The two latter reasons are not usually the dominant ones because tuber formation takes place as soon as flowering in most plants begins. By the time flowering has ended, tuber formation is either finished or partly completed. The dormancy after flowering can be retarded by cool damp conditions, even to the extent of producing secondary growth. The tuber does not increase in size but can even lead away to rotting by not drying out enough with rise in temperature.

I regard the actual drying out of the plant as the MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT IN THE WHOLE CULTURE OF TUBEROUS DROSERAS. The drying out process must be slow and never wet, the period being at least one month to total dryness from moist conditions. The pots containing unexposed tubers can then be even exposed to very high temperatures up to 140°F. But this is not at all necessary. The pots can be stored in a sheltered shed away from wind, sun and rain until autumn. As soon as the plant shows signs of die back after maturity or flowering, it MUST be allowed to DRY off or else the tuber will be lost.

All tuberous droseras develop fibrous root systems. The extent and concentration varies from species to species and most of all on the particular soil. Most roots grow close to and extend below the tubers (Fig. 1).

So, keeping this fact in mind, potting a tuberous drosera would mean using a deep pot and a good, well-drained soil mix. For the latter, I use two main components, sand and peat moss. The ratio of the mixture varies with the species but common sense tells one that more sand is needed for well-drained species and more peat for the swampy types. For well-drained species use two parts sand to one part peat in a 6-8" pot. For the swamp species use one part sand and two parts peat in a 5-6" pot. The medium should always be loose.

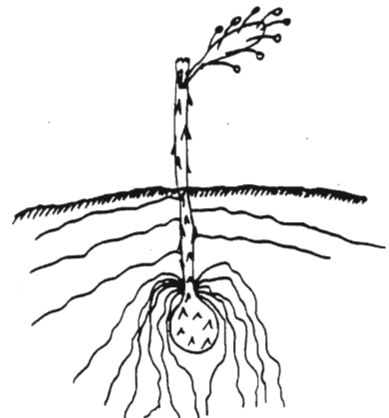


Fig. 1

Watering should also be practised using common sense. Never overly wet even for the swamp species. It's better to give them semi-shade and cool and humid conditions than too much sun and water.

*Fertilization IS GOOD FOR TUBEROUS DROSERAS.* But please, use common sense on this. Foliar feeding is effective in increasing tuber size toward the end of the season but not so for increasing leaf size in rosetted ones. Erect and climbing droseras nearly always produce mature size leaves regardless of height. Fertilization will increase vigor and tuber size for next year. Feeding should not be heavy at any time or else the roots will burn. About one-fourth strength once every two weeks is all right.

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