

THE VENUSIAN LIZARD TRAP

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I have grown carnivorous plants for a few years now, but really ramped up my collection since moving to Athens, Georgia, last year.

Last summer I had a *Dionaea muscipula* plant sitting out on my deck where it made a good living catching two to three flies per day on average without my help. It grew very well, and at its peak it had well over twenty large traps on long sturdy stalks. It is not any special cultivar; it is just a normal plant. But it has a huge appetite!

One day I went out and found a young cockroach (they are ubiquitous outdoors here) about 2.5 cm (one inch) long caught inside a trap. In my experience, cockroaches are awful carnivore food, and the trap was already rotting off. It smelled like a dead animal 10 times the size. As I was snipping off the rotten trap to get rid of the foul stench, I noticed another trap with what appeared to be a worm hanging out. Then I noticed two legs hanging off the “worm.” It was actually a small green anole! This little *Anolis carolinensis* had apparently jumped from my deck railing, over the moat my flytrap pot was in, and landed in a most unfortunate spot! You might suspect that this could have been the result of a forced feeding by sadistic neighborhood children, but my deck, where the plant is grown, is inaccessible except from my second story room. The flytrap is not even visible from the ground level, so this happened completely naturally. By the time I found it, the anole was already dead. I was surprised it could not escape, but it looks to be in a rather awkward position. I hoped to see how well the trap would do with digesting such a strange prey, but the next morning both the lizard and 3/4 of the trap were missing. I suspect the Carolina Wrens or Northern Mockingbirds that frequent my deck found the free meal.

Definitely, a strange and unlikely occurrence!

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This, and the front cover, show *Anolis carolinensis* in the maw of *Dionaea muscipula*.

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Cover: View of *Anolis carolinensis* in the maw of *Dionaea muscipula*. Photo by Joel McNeal. Article on page 54.

Back cover: *Sarracenia* 'Opawa Emperor' pitcher lid. Photo by Mike Gilson. Article on page 56.

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