

FLY FISHING

DAVID CRUMP • CAROLINA CARNIVOROUS GARDENS • 4174 WELLING AVENUE •
CHARLOTTE, NC 28208 • USA

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What is a fishing article doing in Carnivorous Plant Newsletter? Read on to see how one hobby interest can overlap with another!

When it gets hot in the Carolinas in late spring, the crappie and brim fishing slows down. At the same time, the large *Dionaea muscipula* plants which I have growing in redwood hot tubs are almost at their prime. There are probably two hundred or more in each of my tubs. It becomes very tedious trying to feed all those hungry mouths with crickets left over from the most recent fishing trip.

One day after a fishing trip I noticed about ten or so flies landing on a dead and stinking bait minnow. Wow! An idea came to me. What if I put the bait in the flytrap bog and see if it would draw flies to the awaiting open and hungry traps. I tried, and Whamo! it drew them like flies (pardon the phrase). On that day many traps got fed, and I just stood back and watched in total amazement.

On my next fishing trip I saved about thirty minnows for my bog tubs. First I let the minnows become really smelly, then I scattered them among the plants. The smell of the decaying minnows brought all the flies in the neighborhood to the awaiting *Dionaea*. And it was a great bargain—would you rather have more flies around, or happy traps smiling at you for your good deed?

On the day of my experiment, my friend Dr. Larry Mellichamp (from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte) came by and said, “This is the greatest thing since sliced bread!” We were both amazed at all the activity around the traps. Flies were everywhere—there must have been five hundred or more. The innocent flies were getting trapped and the ones that were lucky enough to escape would circle and come right back until they, too, succumbed to the snap-traps. We could not keep up with all there was to observe.

The activity did not slow down until sunset. It was then I realized what a great thing I had found, and that it should be shared with others. Try the fly-banquet yourself, but only do it only three or four times in a growing season. Too many flies may be as bad as not enough. Canned sardines would probably work if you cannot get bait minnows.

Fishing for flies can be fun, and look at all the time you will save by not having to hand feed all your beloved *Dionaea muscipula*. Enjoy!



Figure 1: A scene from David's weird backyard. Photo by L. Mellichamp.