By: Evan Sloan

The Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant species that was first discovered by a colonial governor of North Carolina in the 1700s. Since its discovery, people have been enthralled by the plant’s worldly beauty and strange feeding habits. Charles Darwin thought it was one of the world’s most magnificent plants. However, in recent years poachers have become the flytrap’s newest admirer.

Poaching is a big problem for the tiny plant, as it only grows wild in the swamps near Wilmington, North Carolina. This limited range translates into a limited number of plants. It has been estimated that there may only be 35,000 plants growing in the wild. Most of these plants grow in one of the only three remaining populations of Venus flytraps left in the wild. Poachers have only made the problems caused by the flytrap’s limited range worse. Over the last few years, tens of thousands of Venus flytraps have gone missing every year.

These plants have fallen victim to what is essentially a Venus flytrap crime ring. The actions of this crime ring have earned the flytrap the title of one of the world’s most endangered plants.

However, this does not mean all is lost for the noble Venus flytrap, as steps are being taken to ensure the species continues to grow here on Earth. One such measure to ensure the longevity of the plant involves increased criminal penalties for those caught poaching Venus Flytraps.
North Carolina is seeking to protect this precious plant and stop those dastardly criminals by imposing much harsher criminal penalties. As of December 1, 2014, it is a felony punishable by up to twenty-five months in prison, to be caught poaching Venus flytraps.[ix] This is a seismic change from previous penalties, which were essentially a slap on the wrist. Under previous laws, poachers were only penalized by a fine ranging from $10 to $50 per plant and had no chance of incarceration.[x] The new law has no limit on the fines that may be levied against a poacher.[xi] Law enforcement officials are hopeful that the harsher penalties will be a deterrent to those who would illegally collect Venus flytraps.[xii] They also hope the felony charge will aid in the apprehension of poachers that are involved in the Venus flytrap crime ring.[xiii] This is the end goal of this new law: to stop Venus flytrap poaching once and for all. If this new law can remove the incentives for poaching it will be a massive success. However, only time will tell if the new law will be able to achieve this accomplishment. Let us hope the Venus flytrap has found a permanent home here on Earth in the swamps surrounding Wilmington, North Carolina.


[ii] Id.


[iv] Id.


[vi] Jackson, supra note iii.

[vii] Id.

[viii] Rogers, supra note v.


[x] Maguire, supra note i.

[xi] Id.

[xii] Id.

[xiii] Rogers, supra note v.

[xiv] Id.
Love this! A great read! Captivating!

This is the most captivating article I have read about Venus Flytrap poaching laws!! A must read!!!