

Giant Smelly Plant Attracts Thousands



Often people bring flowers into their homes because they have a pleasant scent. But the foul-smelling “corpse plant” is one flower that should stay outside.

The real name for the corpse plant is *titan arum*, but it got its nickname from the terrible odor it emits when it blooms. People have compared its smell to garbage or rotting meat. Corpse plants don’t bloom often, though, and when they do, people often stand in line to get a whiff.

A corpse plant that recently bloomed at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., attracted thousands of visitors during the two days it stayed in bloom. People also came because there are only about 12 corpse plants in the U.S., and most people never get to see -- or smell -- one.

Corpse plants usually bloom once every five years. This is the first time the one in Washington bloomed, and it is 14 years old. The plants have a very tall, cone-shaped bloom. They can grow to be 12 feet tall in Indonesia, their native land. Scientists think the corpse plant is the largest flower in the world that does not grow on a tree.

NEWS WORD BOX

botanical garden	emit
foul-smelling	scent
corpse	Indonesia
pollen	attractive

While the corpse plant may smell bad to us, it is very attractive to insects that like to lay their eggs in rotten meat. By smelling like bad meat, the plant attracts insects that spread the plant’s pollen around and help make new plants.

MORE FACTS ABOUT CORPSE PLANTS

- An Italian scientist discovered the corpse plant in 1878.
- The first U.S. corpse plant bloomed at the New York Botanical Garden in 1937.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Some people say a corpse plant is the worst thing they have ever smelled. What are the worst things you have ever smelled?