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Amazing Species: Titan Arum



Geographical range



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Titan Arum (*Amorphophallus titanum*) has the largest flowering structure of any plant in the world, rising up to 3 metres from the ground. It is known as the ‘corpse flower’, from the infamous rotting smell when the plant is in bloom.

This smell helps to attract pollinators during its short-lived flowering events. Although Titan Arum has a long life span of over 30-40 years, it flowers only occasionally and these events are often difficult to predict.

Its native range in Sumatra, Indonesia is threatened by timber harvesting and creation of oil palm plantations. In addition, the myth about Titan Arum being a predator to people (due to the markings on the leaves’ stems which resemble a snake) leads to the destruction of the species when people find it growing in their farmlands.

As the wild population declines, over 90 botanic gardens across 18 countries grow Titan Arum to support its conservation; it has flowered successfully around 100 times in captivity. It is also legally protected within Indonesia.