

What Stinks?

IT'S 200 POUNDS. It's six feet tall. It smells incredibly horrible—like a dead animal.

Is it your great-uncle Fred? Surprisingly, no! It's the world's stinkiest plant: the corpse flower.

The corpse flower, or carrion flower, got its name because of the disgusting stench it emits when its flower blooms. It blooms only once every 7-10 years because of its immense size. It occasionally grows to 10 feet tall! That could be to your living room ceiling! The stink of its flower lasts only 48 hours.

Corpse flowers, also called corpse plants, are scientifically named titan arum (TY-ten AIR-oom) and, unless strategically cultivated, are found only in the wilds of the Sumatran rainforests of Indonesia.

While people might think that corpse flowers reek, pollinators love them! Our God, the master of creation, strategized this plan. Titan arum grows upward as a large stalk, and its flower, which is actually many small flowers, is at the base of that stalk with extremely large, floppy, lettuce-like petals to protect the fragile flowers.

The corpse flower has both female and male flowers close together on the same stalk on every plant. That is where the pollinators come in.

First the female flowers open and, within 1-2 days, the male flowers at the base of the stalk also open. Because the pollinators love the stench of rotting meat that comes from the corpse flower, they immediately swarm to pollinate the plant as they move from flower to flower. Now the plant can reproduce. God certainly thought of everything!

Arboretums worldwide have labored to cultivate these difficult plants. It's important work because corpse flowers' native environment is threatened by human encroachment.

When corpse flowers bloom at arboretums, thousands of people rush to see and smell these natural stinkbombs, especially at night when the corpse flowers' blooms are at their smelliest.

If you are lucky enough to see one of these rare corpse flower plants, you are not likely to forget it. If you get the chance to smell one, you will definitely think you are in the presence of decaying flesh, even though none is in sight!

Our Lord, the Creator of all, is full of surprises. Do you smell a stink? Is it your brother ... or a corpse flower?

Dig deeper: Corpse Flower for kids by Learn Bright: [youtube.com/watch?v=vtvpyhfxS3Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtvpyhfxS3Q).

Genesis 1:11-12: God commanded the earth to bring forth vegetation including seed-bearing plants and fruit trees according to its kind. **B**



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