

Massachusetts florist and greenhouse shows off once in a decade “corpse flower”

Nunan Florist & Greenhouses in Georgetown, Massachusetts has announced a “once in a lifetime” opportunity for people to see their “corpse flower” which is now in full bloom.

Colloquially called a “corpse flower,” the *titan arum* or *Amorphophallus titanum*, is native to Sumatra, Indonesia. When in full bloom it can stand as high as 8’ tall and be up to 4’ feet in diameter – though this specific flower is expected to reach 4’ tall. As its name would suggest, the aroma is similar to a dead person.

Why would anyone want to smell a corpse? Besides having the aroma of rotten flesh it only blooms about once a decade, it is extremely alien-looking flower and is massive – considered by some to be the world’s largest. The Titan Arum can grow up to 6 inches a day!

Once the plant blooms it opens up to reveal a velvety maroon interior and emits a foul stench produced by dimethyl trisulfide, dimethyl disulfide, trimethylamine, isovaleric acid, benzyl alcohol, and indole. While those compounds don’t mean anything to most of it, people who have gotten a whiff describe it variously as a mix of garlic, stinky cheese, rotting fish, boiled cabbage, sweaty socks, with a hint or kiss of sweet flowery scent.

Why does the “corpse flower” do this? The scent attracts a variety of pollinators such as carrion beetles, flesh flies, and sweat bees. □

Want to see the flower in person? Maybe take a selfie? Nunan Florist & Greenhouses is located at 269 Central St. and open

Monday-Saturday from 8:00am-5:00pm and on Sunday from 9:00am-5:00pm.

All photos by Nunan Florist & Greenhouses:

