

The Rafflesia: World's Stinkiest Flower

by Lill Pluta

The Rafflesia is the world's largest flower, but you will not find it at your local florist shop. This bloom is too large and too smelly to be included in any bouquet. It grows to be about a yard wide, and it smells like rotting meat. The horrid odor helps this rare plant to survive. The stench draws flies, which in turn pollinate the Rafflesia. This is how the Rafflesia reproduces itself.

Rafflesias do not have stems, roots, or leaves. They do not produce chlorophyll. Rafflesias are parasites that attach themselves to vines. The vines serve as host plants which provide the Rafflesia with all its nutritional requirements.

Today the Rafflesia is in danger of becoming extinct. Loggers damage the flowers when they cut down trees. Tourists who come to observe the Rafflesia and other jungle wonders carelessly trample the blooms and make sure this extraordinary



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The Rafflesia is a parasite.
It doesn't sting; it doesn't bite.
Instead it smells like rotten meat
or dirty, grubby, sweaty feet.
It's putrid smell entices flies
into a bloom of giant size
that's wider than a traffic sign
and stuck onto a jungle vine.
The flies aren't on its dinner plate;
instead, the insects pollinate.
And when they're done, they're free to go
to help more stinky blossoms grow.

Name: _____

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1. Tell whether each fact can be learned from reading the poem, the article, or both. On each line below, write the word poem, article, or both.

_____ A Rafflesia flower smells like rotten meat.

_____ Rafflesia plants are endangered.

_____ Rafflesias do not have roots or stems.

2. How big is a Rafflesia flower?



3. If a Ra

4. List two reasons why the Rafflesia is in danger of becoming extinct.

5. How does the terrible smell of the Rafflesia help it survive?

Name: _____

The Rafflesia - Vocabulary

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Match the vocabulary word on the left with the best definition on the right.

Use a dictionary if you need help.

_____ 1. florist

a. to attract

_____ 2. stench

b. terrible smell

_____ 3. chlorophyll

c. person who works with and sells flowers

_____ 4. pollinate

other living

_____ 5. photosynthesis

green

_____ 6. entice

f. moving pollen from one flower to another so the plant can reproduce



Fill in each of the the blank lines, using the one vocabulary words above.

7. Grandma is trying to _____ us to visit her by baking cookies.

8. When Bill took off his shoes, a terrible _____ filled the room.

9. The bees will buzz in and out of the apple blossoms, which will _____ the apple tree.

10. In autumn, maple tree leaves lose their _____, change color, and fall to the ground.

ANSWER KEY

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1. Tell whether each fact can be learned from reading the poem, the article, or both. On each line below, write the word poem, article, or both.

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article Rafflesia plants are endangered.

article Rafflesias do not have roots or stems.

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A Rafflesia flower grows to be about a yard wide.

Also a

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Rafflei
host plant.



?

from the

4. List two reasons why the Rafflesia is in danger of becoming extinct.

The Rafflesia is becoming extinct because loggers damage the flowers when they cut down trees. Also, tourists trample and crush the flowers when they visit the jungle.

5. How does the terrible smell of the Rafflesia help it survive?

The terrible smell attracts flies that help pollinate the flower.

Name: _____

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Fill in each of the the blank lines, using the one vocabulary words above.

7. Grandma is trying to **entice** us to visit her by baking cookies.

8. When Bill took off his shoes, a terrible **stench** filled the room.

9. The bees will buzz in and out of the apple blossoms, which will **pollinate** the apple tree.

10. In autumn, maple tree leaves lose their **chlorophyll**, change color, and fall to the ground.