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 crush the vines on which they grow. Many people are working together to make sure this extraordinary flower is around for future generations to admire.

Stinky Parasite
by Lill Pluta

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.
The Rafflesia
by Lill Piuta

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 Rafflesia does not have roots, how does it get nutrients that help it survive?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

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?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
The Rafflesia - Vocabulary
by Lill Pluta

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. parasite  d. a living thing that lives on another living thing, using it for nourishment
_____ 5. pollinate  e. chemical that makes plants green
_____ 6. entice  f. moving pollen from one flower to another so the plant can reproduce

Fill in each of 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.
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.

   **both**  A Rafflesia flower smells like rotten meat.
   **article**  Rafflesia plants are endangered.
   **article**  Rafflesias do not have roots or stems.

2. How big is a Rafflesia flower?

   **A Rafflesia flower grows to be about a yard wide.**
   **Also accept:** A rafflesia grows to be about as big as a traffic sign.

3. If a Rafflesia does not have roots, how does it get nutrients that help it survive?

   **Raffleisa is a parasite. It attaches it to other plants and uses the nourishment from the host plant.**

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.**
Match the vocabulary word on the left with the best definition on the right. Use a dictionary if you need help.

**c** 1. florist  
**a.** to attract

**b** 2. stench  
**b.** terrible smell

**e** 3. chlorophyll  
**c.** person who works with and sells flowers

**d** 4. parasite  
**d.** a living thing that lives on another living thing, using it for nourishment

**f** 5. pollinate  
**e.** chemical that makes plants green

**a** 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 **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.