

'Like an urban dumpster': rare corpse flower stinks out California

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Here's looking at... phew! The corpse flower is only in bloom for a couple of days, but with a putrid stench it makes its presence felt.

A rose by any other name might smell as sweet, but with a corpse flower—well, tinkering around the edges isn't going to help.

A giant *Amorphophallus Titanium* opened its less-than-delicate petals this week at the Huntington Library near Los Angeles, an event that only comes once every few years.

And it is giving off a powerful reek.

"It smells of rotting flesh," says conservatory gardener Bryce Dunn. "It's trying to attract carrion flies to come pollinate it, so the more it can get that smell out the more flies it attracts, the better the plant does."

The bloom, which stands as tall as a human being, is actually a collection of hundreds of little flowers, both male and female, opening at slightly different times, and has been preparing for its moment in the spotlight for around a month.

But like all the best floral treats—think of the delicate ephemerality of Japan's famous cherry blossom, but stinky and smelling of dead things—you've got to be quick to catch it.

"Once the flower opens, it's gone within 48 hours," says Dunn. "So it's a very, very short-lived [bloom](#), but it's quite spectacular."

Visitors on Monday flocked to see the corpse flower in all its pungent splendor.



Blooming smelly: The corpse flower is a thing of beauty to look at, but -- whoa! -- that stench!

"It's such a rare event. I think I'm so lucky to get to see it," Diana Doo told AFP.

But for Paul Rulmohr, the name didn't quite seem accurate.

"I wouldn't say that it was like a [corpse](#)," he said.

"It's more like an urban dumpster. But it's good... if you're into that ."

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