

Visitors line up to see and smell a corpse flower's stinking bloom in San Francisco

February 29 2024, by Terry Chea



A corpse flower in bloom is shown at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu

Crowds lined up in San Francisco on Wednesday to see—and smell—the

blooming of an endangered tropical flower that releases a pungent odor when it opens once every several years.

An *Amorphophallus titanum*, also known as a corpse flower, began blooming Tuesday afternoon at the California Academy of Sciences, a [research institution](#) and museum.

The plant blooms for one to three days once every seven to 10 years. During the bloom, it releases a powerful [smell](#) described by some as rotting food or sweaty socks.

"It's kind of imitating the smell of kind of a dead carcass to kind of get all the [flies](#) to come and interact with it, pick up pollen, and then take that [pollen](#) to another flower that it might investigate due to its smell," said Lauren Greig, a horticulturist, California Academy of Sciences.

It was the first bloom for the corpse flower named Mirage, which was donated to the California Academy of Sciences in 2017. It's been housed in the museum's rainforest exhibit since 2020.

Bri Lister, a data scientist who lives in San Francisco, moved some meetings and waited in line for about an hour to catch a whiff of the plant.

"In certain directions, I definitely picked up on the sweaty socks, sweaty gym clothes, but probably luckily not full-on rotting meat, but definitely a smellier plant than average," Lister said.



A sign advising information about corpse flowers is displayed near a corpse flower in bloom at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



A corpse flower in bloom is shown at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



Visitors line up to see a corpse flower in bloom at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



The inside of a corpse flower in bloom is shown at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



Visitors line up to see a corpse flower in bloom at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



Visitors look at a corpse flower in bloom at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



Visitors line up to see a corpse flower in bloom at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



A corpse flower in bloom is shown at the California Academy of Sciences' Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu



California Academy of Sciences staff member Sterling Balice takes a photo inside a corpse flower in bloom at the Academy's Osher Rainforest in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Chiu

Monica Becker took her child out of school to see the flower in person after watching it on the academy's livestream.

"When we heard it bloomed, we were like, we got it, we got to go, first thing in the morning when they open. So here we are," Becker said.

The *Amorphophallus titanum* is native to the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It is listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with only less than 1,000 individual plants left in the wild.

© 2024 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Visitors line up to see and smell a corpse flower's stinking bloom in San Francisco (2024, February 29) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-02-visitors-line-corpse-bloom-san.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.