



Three corpse flowers bloomed at USBG in 2017

Three corpse flower (*Amorphophallus titanum*) plants, also known as titan arum or the stinky plant, bloomed in August 2017 at the U.S. Botanic Garden.

It was the first bloom for all three of the plants, which varied in age from five years up to 12 years old. This appears to be the first time in North America that three corpse flower plants all blooming at the same time.

The three corpse flowers reached peak bloom on August 20, 22, and 28. The plants departed the USBG Conservatory for the Production Facility greenhouse on Sept. 6, 2017, where they will be cared for until they bloom again.

The allure of the corpse flower comes from its great size (it is the largest unbranched inflorescence in the plant kingdom), powerful stink, and fleeting presence. In its natural display, the plants were between 2 and 3 feet tall, but they grew as tall as 8 feet 3.5 inches. Referred to as the corpse flower or stinky plant, its putrid smell reaches its peak bloom at night into the early morning. The odor is often compared to the stench of rotting flesh. The inflorescence also generates heat, which allows it to bloom further. This combination of heat and smell efficiently lures corpse-attracted pollinators, such as carrion beetles and flies, from across long distances.

The corpse flower does not have an annual blooming cycle. The bloom emerges from, and energy is stored in, a huge underground stem called a "corm." It only blooms when sufficient energy is accumulated, making time between flowering unpredictable, spanning from a few years to more than a decade. It requires very specific conditions, including warm day and night temperatures and high humidity, making botanic gardens well suited to support this strange plant outside of its natural range.

This plant is native to the tropical rainforests of Sumatra, Indonesia, and first became known to science in 1878. In its natural habitat, the corpse flower only blooms once a year. Public viewings of this unique plant have occurred a limited number of times in the United States. The U.S. Botanic Garden has displayed blooming corpse flowers in 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2017 (three blooms).

Watch how the three 2017 blooms grew, opened, and collapsed on this live stream recording:

Life Cycle of the Titan Arum

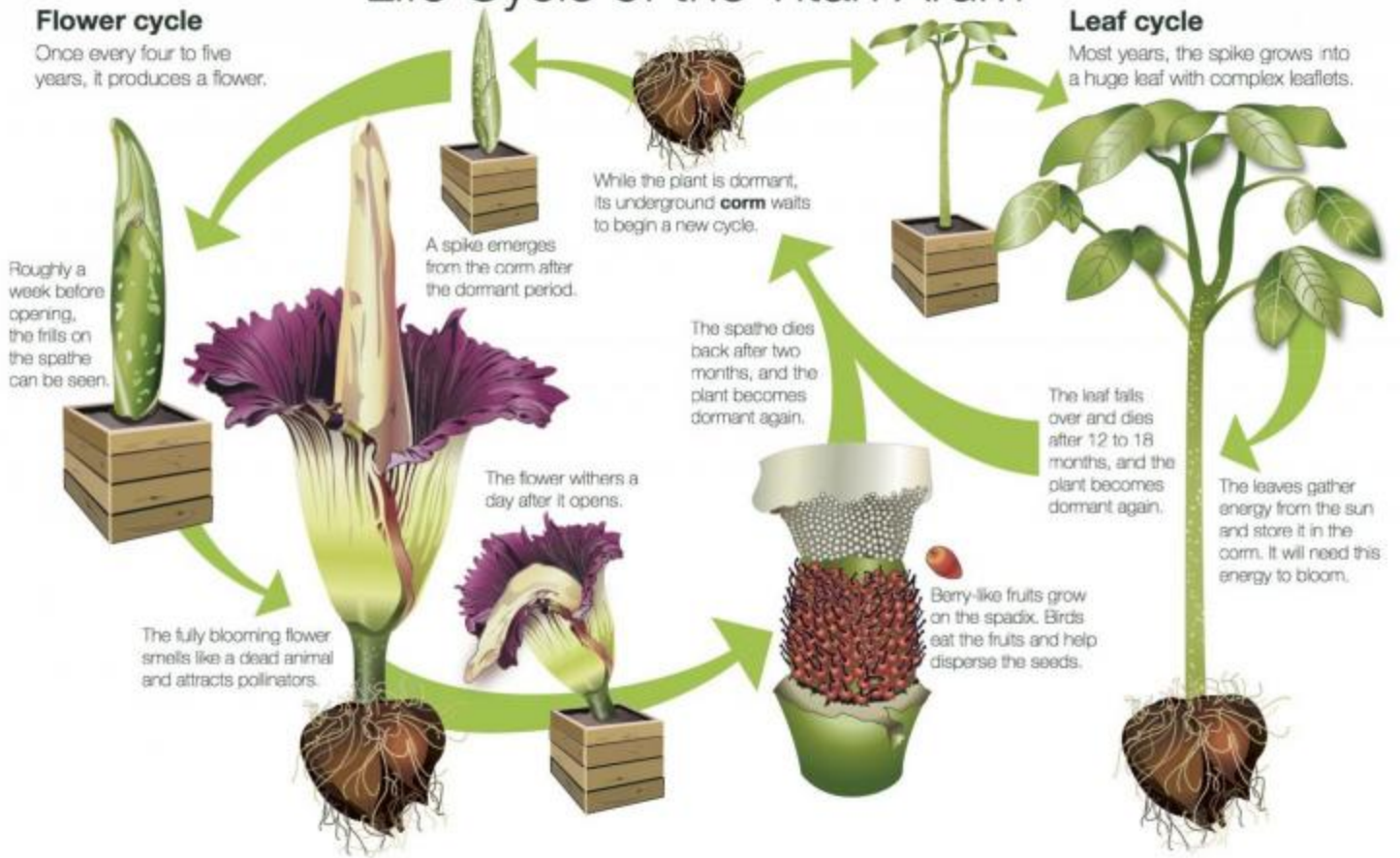


Illustration by Chicago Botanic Garden

Chemistry of its smell

Want to learn a bit more about the plant and its unique smell? Check out this great video we helped create:

We shared the 2016 plant's life cycle via a live webcam, which has now ended. In addition to this video from the morning it started opening, find all the live webcam videos on our YouTube channel. If you visited, find your date and see yourself with the corpse flower!

Photo of



The U.S. Botanic Garden previously displayed a corpse flower bloom in 2016 and 2013. More than 130,000 people came to see the plant in person and 650,000 viewers accessed the live webstream.

[Learn more about the 2016 bloom.](#)

[Learn more about the 2013 bloom.](#)

Source URL: <https://www.usbg.gov/three-corpse-flowers-bloomed-usbg-2017>