



PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. BOTANIC GARDEN SHOWCASES *AMORPHOPHALLUS TITANUM*

Huge, Rare Plant Now on Display in Garden Court

July 14, 2003 - Washington, DC - The U.S. Botanic Garden is currently exhibiting a rare specimen of the huge *Amorphophallus titanum* plant, also known as titan arum or corpse flower. This plant, native only to the tropical rainforests of Sumatra, Indonesia, has been exhibited on very rare occasions since the first recorded bloom in the U.S. in 1937. The specimen at the U.S. Botanic Garden has bloomed just one other time since it was received in October 1993. It grew from a seed collected by Dr. James R. Symon.

When in full bloom, a fleshy central column called a spadix becomes exposed. Hiding at the base of the spadix exist thousands of true flowers. Apart from being known worldwide for its amazing bloom, the *Amorphophallus titanum* is also known for its repulsive scent. Strongest at night, the odor attracts pollinators, which are carrion feeders in the plant's native Sumatra.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to view one of the rarest blooms in the botanical world. The huge inflorescence -- the largest in the world -- can reach over 6 feet high!

The United States Botanic Garden Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, every day of the year from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue, SW, at the foot of the U.S. Capitol. Visitors are encouraged to take Metrobus and Metrorail. Further information is available by calling 202-225-8333 or visiting our web site at www.usbg.gov.