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Drop-Dead Beauty: The Poughkeepsie Gardens Highlights Titan Arum

Arboretum and Botanic Gardens to Celebrate Poughkeepsie's First Bloom of Rare Plant

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. – Sept. 18, 2024 – The arboretum is dying to show off its newest edition. The rare titan arum, known as the smelliest plant on Earth, blooms in two weeks, the first time it will spread its leaves in Poughkeepsie history.

The titan arum, of the Araneae family, is a plant that emits the nauseating odor of rotten flesh for the first hours after blooming, a trick practiced to attract flesh-loving pollinators. The plant grows only in the rainforests of Sumatra, Indonesia. Gardens worldwide are working to conserve the rare species listed on the IUCN Red List as Endangered. According to the United States Botanic Garden, fewer than 1,000 titan arum remain in the wild. The organization credits this decline to logging and industrialization.

Blooming only every 4 to 10 years, the titan arum rapidly grows in size leading up to its flowering, at points gaining nearly six inches of height each day. The outer layer of the plant falls off during the flowering process, as the plant begins producing heat to attract pollinators.

Eager to welcome the public to this rare sight, the Arboretum is taking steps to prepare for an inflated number of guests. “We are incredibly excited to share such a rare sight with our community,” Van Montgomery, chairman of the arboretum’s board of directors, said.

The Gardens are open to guests from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 11 a.m.–5 p.m. on the weekends. To view updates on the status of Poughkeepsie’s smelly titan arum bloom, visit the Arboretum website at poughkeepsiearboretum.org or call the front desk at 555-282-2322.

The Poughkeepsie Arboretum and Botanic Gardens are based in Poughkeepsie, New York, where the facility boasts 12 acres of nature, including 20 distinct garden areas. The Gardens have been open to the public since 1912 with a mission to inspire and educate the public on the beauty and importance of plants while working to advance sustainability and environmental well-being.

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