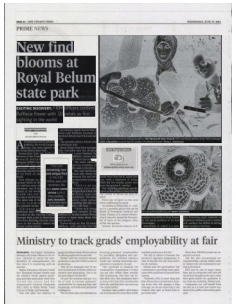


Headline	New find blooms at Royal Belum state park		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	27 Jun 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	Local News	Circulation	136,530
Page No	14	Readership	330,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	514 cm ²
Journalist	Audrey Dermawan	AdValue	RM 8,350
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 25,050



New find blooms at Royal Belum state park

EXCITING DISCOVERY: FRIM officers confirm Rafflesia flower with 10 petals as first sighting in the world

AUDREY DERMAWAN

AN extremely rare 10-petalled Rafflesia, the world's largest flower, has been sighted at the Royal Belum State Park.

Researchers from the Rafflesia Division of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) have confirmed that the discovery, made last Saturday, was the first of its kind in the world.

Park officials on a routine check at the 130-million-year-old rainforest, one of the oldest in the world, found two full-bloomed Rafflesias. The other was of the more common five-petalled variety.

Six-petalled Rafflesias have been recorded at the Gunung Gading National Park, a two to three-hour drive from Kuching, the only other place in the country where the flowers mostly bloom.

An Internet search showed that a seven-petal Rafflesia bloomed at

the Royal Belum State Park just last year.

The parasitic plant is found only in Southeast Asia.

Royal Belum State Park manager Iylia Ainuddin said the 10-petal Rafflesia was a cross between the *Rafflesia cantleyi* and *R. azlani* species.

The other rafflesia species available in the park is the *Karei*.

She said Rafflesias would only bloom for between five and seven days before turning black.

"This is an extremely rare and unique find in this 130 million-year-old rainforest. We have never come across anything like this before," she said.

"FRIM will bring back samples of the

Rafflesia for further studies. We are excited to know more about this new species."

Elaborating on the 10-petal Rafflesia, Iylia said the five big

petals were from the *R. azlani* species, with a diameter of 46cm, while the five smaller petals were from the species *R. cantleyi*.

The 117,500ha rainforest was declared as Royal Belum State Park by the sultan of Perak on July 31, 2003.

There are 12 spots in the area where Rafflesias bloomed.

According to Wikipedia, *R. cantleyi* is a parasitic plant that can be found in Peninsular Malaysia and Pulau Tioman. It is almost identical to *R. hasselti*, except for the number of warts on the perigone lobes of the two species.

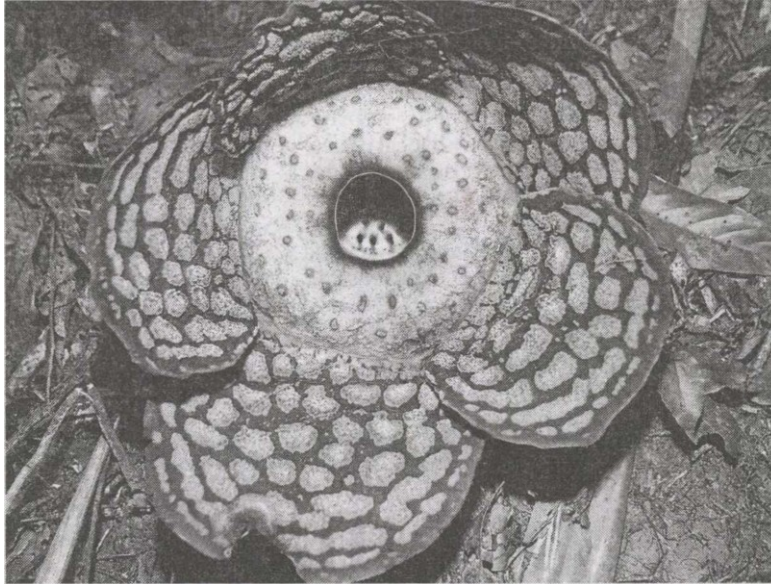
Another distinctive feature of *R. cantleyi* is its ability to form flowers on the aerial portions of its host *Tetrastigma*.

Meanwhile, *R. azlani* is a parasitic flowering plant endemic to Peninsular Malaysia and is similar to *R. cantleyi*, but differs in having larger perigone blotches.

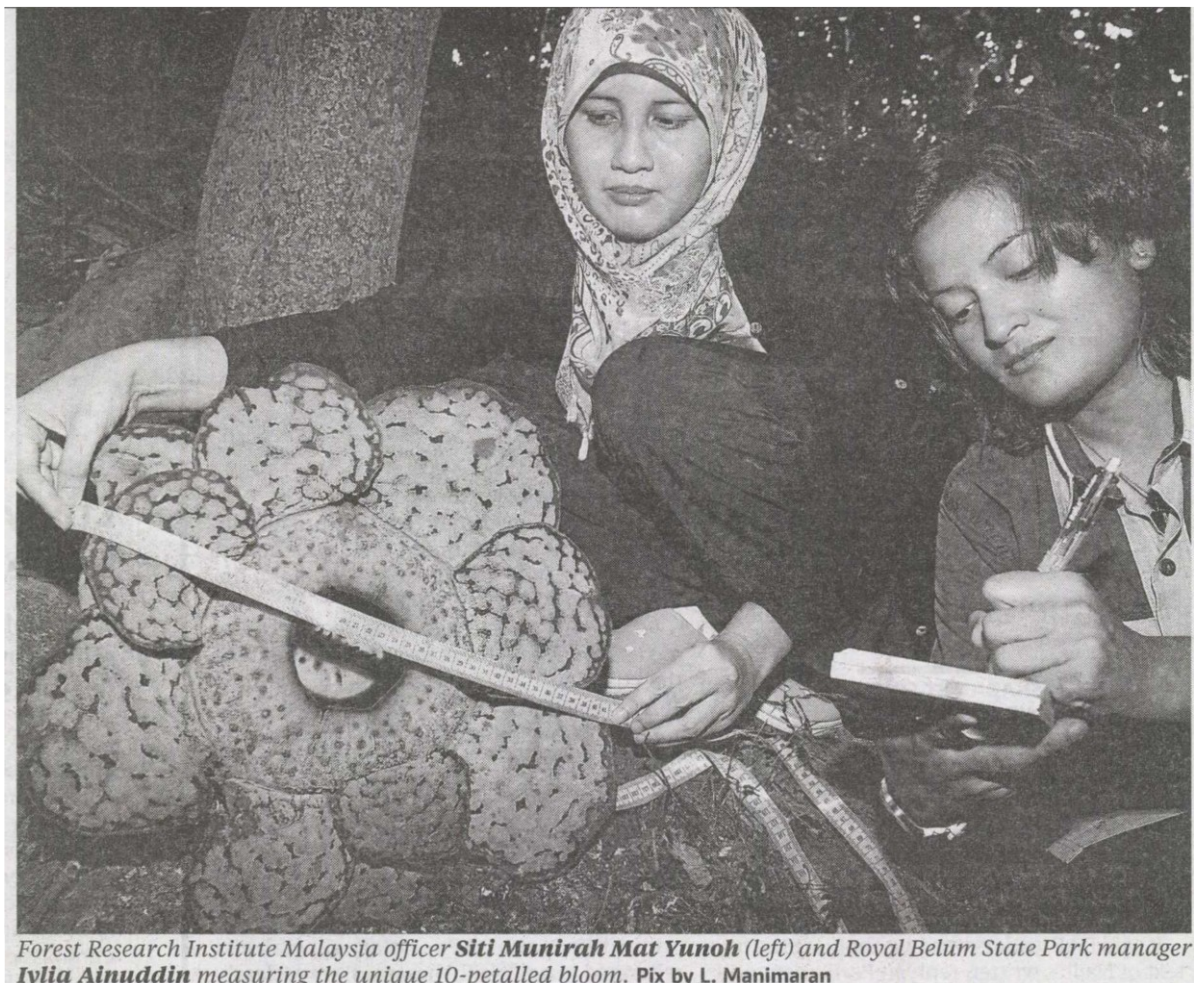
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Five-petalled *Rafflesias* are **more common**.



Forest Research Institute Malaysia officer **Siti Munirah Mat Yunoh** (left) and Royal Belum State Park manager **Iylia Ainuddin** measuring the unique 10-petalled bloom. Pix by L. Manimaran