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# Flower with fruity aroma

Bloom is of a new species of plant discovered on Gunung Kanthan

By PATRICK LEE

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**PETALING JAYA:** A new species of plant, *Meiogyne kanthanensis*, with citrus-smelling flowers was discovered on a limestone hill in Perak last year

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (Frim) plant taxonomist Dr Ruth Kiew who made the discovery on Gunung Kanthan, said the plant was so rare that only three trees of its kind were seen.

An international scientific journal published in New Zealand known as *Phytotaxa* reported that the plant's flower had an interesting smell.

"The flower...(has) a fruity aroma, a complex scent reminiscent of pomelo, citrus, lychee, plum and lemon grass," it said.

The report was co-authored by Dr Kiew, Frim Forest Biodiversity director Dr Saw Leng Guan, and Frim research officers Joanne Tan and Ummul Nazrah Abdul Rahman.

It also mentioned the discovery of two other new species - *Gymnostachyum kanthanense* and *Vatica kanthanensis* - both also found on the hill.

Tan said in an interview that scientists had not noticed the plant there before, and that its flower was only visible during certain times of the year.

"We try to be there nearly every month, but might miss some of the flowering seasons," she said.

Flora and Fauna International (Asia-Pacific) regional director Tony Whitten said the discovery meant that experts would have to sur-



**Fragrant:**The flower of the new tree species found at the Gua Kanthan mouth on the hill's Area D.

vey Gunung Kanthan's endemic species and surrounding hills.

"This would be no mean task given the hills' steepness, but it is possible, as the stakes are high - and extinction is final," he said.

Lafarge Malaysia Bhd industrial operations vice-president Mariano Garcia said the discov-

eries would be reviewed along with a previous survey of the hill.

He said local stakeholders would be updated on the progress of a quarry development programme with the biodiversity study. Lafarge is involved in mining limestone in two designated zones on the hill.