

# Rafflesia back in bloom on Mount Kinabalu foothills



## Iconic flora:

A blooming Rafflesia at the Poring Rafflesia Conservation Centre in Kota Kinabalu.

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**KOTA KINABALU:** It is the season of Rafflesia bloom in Sabah's foothills of Mount Kinabalu.

The latest flowering was seen at the Poring Rafflesia Conservation Centre in Kinabalu Park, which started last week.

Sabah Parks director Dr Maklarin Lakim said the species

of Rafflesia Keithii grew to a size of 78cm, and is expected to last until Sunday.

He said the Rafflesia which remains as a protected flora species in Sabah, has continued to flourish steadily over the past decade.

He said this was due to intense protection and conservation works carried out by Sabah Parks and its partners including scien-

tists and botanists.

"Previously, there was scarce detection of the plant, identified as the world's largest flower, due to the large-scale opening up of forests," said Maklarin.

Efforts to preserve and rehabilitate the habitat started, he said, adding there is more blooming in recent years as a result of these initiatives where identified areas, trees and plants were protected

from any form of human disturbance.

He said Rafflesia are parasitic plants that latch on the trunks of plants in forests.

"They mushroom when their habitats are free from any types of disturbance," Maklarin said.

A week earlier, a six-petal Rafflesia Keithii species was reportedly sighted in the same area.