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San Diego Botanic Garden Announces Bloom of Voodoo Lily, Smaller “Cousin” of the Corpse Flower

Encinitas, Calif. - (February 16, 2022) – [San Diego Botanic Garden](#) (SDBG) announced yesterday that a konjac plant – a smaller, but still impressive relative of the corpse plant – is blooming in its Dickinson Family Education Conservatory. The *Amorphophallus konjac*, also commonly called voodoo lily, devil’s tongue, or elephant yam, belongs to the same genus as the famous titan arum, or corpse plant. Like its larger “cousin”, the konjac emits a rotting flesh scent as it blooms, to attract the carcass-eating insects that pollinate it. Thousands of visitors flocked to SDBG in November 2021 to see the blooms of two titan arum plants, including [Jack Smellington](#), the corpse flower that went viral for blooming on Halloween.



A konjac bloom. Credit: iStock



A konjac corm. Credit: iStock

“This bloom will only last a few days, so visitors should plan to visit on Wednesday or Thursday to experience the smell firsthand,” said SDBG Deputy CEO Brandi Eide. “It’s a delight for the eyes but not for the nose. The flowers smell like a dead animal, an irresistible scent to the flies who pollinate them.”

The Garden’s staff first spotted a bloom spike, or inflorescence, emerging from the soil on February 5. During the last ten days, the plant has grown more than three feet in height. Plants in the genus *Amorphophallus* have the longest unbranched flower spikes in the world.

The konjac requires an enormous amount of energy to produce such an exceptional bloom spike in such a short time. It uses the water and nutrients stored in its underground tuber, called a corm. A konjac corm generally needs to be at least seven inches wide to support a bloom, and the bulblike structure of a mature plant can grow to around 10”.



The konjac's starchy corm is edible, and some East and Southeast Asian cuisines use it to make jelly snacks, as well as a flour for noodles and 'yam cakes', a misnomer, as the plant is not actually a tuber from the yam family. The cakes are commonly known in the US by their Japanese name, *konnyaku*, and the noodles are commonly known as *shirataki*. The *Amorphophallus konjac* is native to China's Yunnan Province, and it cultivated throughout the tropical and subtropical parts of China, Indonesia, Japan and Vietnam for both the root vegetable food source and for traditional medicine.

This is the first konjac to bloom in SDBG's Conservatory. It has been at least six years since a konjac has bloomed at the Garden. When grown in tropical conditions, mature plants generally flower each year in late winter to early spring.

The bloom will be open Wednesday and Thursday, and possibly on Friday. SDBG is open 9am – 5pm, Wednesday-Monday, although the Conservatory will close at 3pm on Thursday, February 17, for a private event. The Conservatory will reopen on Friday at 9 am. Tickets and reservations are available through SDBG's [website](#). Members receive free admission. Non-member admissions range from \$12 to \$18. SDBG provides free entry to members of other gardens participating in the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program.

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San Diego Botanic Garden

Established in 1970, San Diego Botanic Garden (SDBG) is a 37-acre urban oasis located in Encinitas, California, just north of San Diego. The Garden's four miles of trails display nearly 5,300 plant species and varieties, including 300 plants for which SDBG is the only garden maintaining a population. SDBG has 15 gardens that represent different regions of the world, 12 demonstration gardens, and the largest public bamboo collection in North America. It also has three children's gardens, including its flagship, one-acre Hamilton Children's Garden, the largest kids' garden on the west coast.