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Rafflesia treat for 96 Unimas students during field trip



FULL BLOOM TREAT: Some of the students gathering around the magnificent Rafflesia at Gunung Gading National Park.

KUCHING: A group of 96 Unimas students from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology were elated to come across the Rafflesia flower in full bloom during their fieldwork at Gunung Gading National Park from May 17 to 19.

The flower measured about 75 cm in diameter.

It had five thick fleshy reddish-orangey petals with lighter colour areas of raised warts and blotches.

If you stick your nose nearer to the flower, you will smell a slightly unpleasant odour mimicking that of a decaying fish.

This foul smell attracts carrion flies which serve as its pollinators.

The Rafflesia is endemic to the state and is gazetted as a totally protected plant under the Sarawak Wildlife Ordinance and the flower serves as a plus factor for the eco-tourism industry in the state.

The Unimas students and the staff felt that this was a most rewarding fieldwork to be able to see this rare and most magnificent representative of the giant flower.

The members of the group would like to thank all the officers of Gunung Gading National Park for the cooperation rendered during the fieldwork.

The students were led by course coordinator Jamilah Jamel and five other colleagues during this field practical to enhance understanding and inculcate basic skills in plant identification and interest towards biodiversity and the environment.

Source: **The Borneo Post**