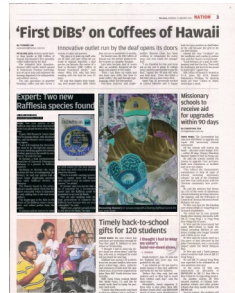


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Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 11,040
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Expert: Two new Rafflesia species found

By **ONG HAN SEAN**
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RAUB: Two new species of the Rafflesia may have been discovered in the Lata Jarum forests in Ulu Dong here.

Frasers Hill Research Centre head Prof Dr Jumaat Adam, who disclosed this, said the flowers were unique in the region.

"I am still studying the discovery. We need to go through the process of cross-checking against the criteria of other species in the world to confirm it," he told *The Star*.

Dr Jumaat, a lead environmental researcher of Universiti Kebangsaan

Malaysia, is a pioneer in Rafflesia research.

Declining to disclose the exact location for fear of endangering the flowers, he said one species had a much larger diaphragm aperture than other Rafflesia flowers in Malaysia.

The flowers found in the peninsula are usually about 10cm but this specie measured 14cm in diameter, he said, adding that it also had more anthers.

The diaphragm is the hole in the centre of the Rafflesia where insects enter and collect pollen from the anther.

Dr Jumaat said he had yet to come

up with names for the new species as there was still a lot to be studied about the flowers.

"Due to scientific-naming conventions, I cannot name the flowers after myself if they are indeed new species," he added.

Dr Jumaat said Lata Jarum had a lot of potential for an eco-tourism centre and the Rafflesia could be promoted as an icon for Raub.

"We are also working with the state government to conserve the Rafflesia here because they are very vulnerable," he said.

"Right now, anyone can just come in and pluck the buds," he said.



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Blossoming discovery: Dr Jumaat posing with a blooming Rafflesia found in the Lata Jarum forest.