We're in the rainforest biome of the Eden Project in Cornwall, and I'm standing next to a Titan Arum in full bloom. The Titan Arum is the world's largest inflorescence. This is basically a whole bunch of flowers working as one. This one is standing at 1 metre 83 centimetres tall, but we have had them up to 2 metres 90. Scientifically known as Amorphophallus titanum and commonly known as the Corpse Flower, these huge flowering structures send their overpowering stench of decay throughout the rainforest, where they attract things like carrion beetles and sweat flies – all looking for somewhere to lay their eggs.

Titan Arums are thermogenic. That means they can raise their own temperature by up to and over ten degrees centigrade. This heats up the perfume in the flower, and this structure in the middle, the spadix, convects the heat, sending the perfume throughout the forest. This flower has taken nine years to prepare for this moment. It will only be reproductive for 48 hours. On the first night the stigma and the ovaries are receptive to pollen. On the second night it will release its own pollen, but by that stage the stigma and ovaries will no longer be receptive.