



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Heritage**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **The smell of the Elephant Yam**

One of the Botanic Gardens' most unusual plants – the Elephant Yam – is now in full flower in the Display Glasshouse. The flower of the Elephant Yam (*Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*) is a large purple knob with a scent like rotting flesh to attract its pollinators, carrion flies and beetles.

The Elephant Yam is found in tropical Queensland and Northern Territory in seasonally dry areas and also occurs through the tropics, from India to Papua New Guinea. It belongs to the Aroid family, which also includes many more familiar plants such as Arum lilies and species of *Monstera* and *Philodendron*.

Because it is a tropical plant from monsoonal areas it requires ample water during the growing season but also needs a dry period. At the Botanic Gardens corms of potted specimens are removed and stored dry during the winter period and replanted each spring. A high phosphorus fertilizer is occasionally applied to ensure maximum growth and health of the plant.

The Elephant Yam should remain in flower for about 10 days and can be viewed in the Display Glasshouse from 10.00am to 3.00pm each day.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens is on Clunies Ross Street, Acton on the lower slopes of Black Mountain, Canberra.

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