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**Alluring:**  
The Rafflesia flower found in Lojing Highlands in Gua Musang recently.

## Lecturer: Protect Rafflesia in L. Highlands

**KOTA BARU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) senior lecturer Zulhazaman Hamzah has called for the preservation of the habitat of a rare Rafflesia species named *kerrii* found at Lojing Highlands in Gua Musang recently.

Zulhazman, who led an 18-day Lojing Highlands scientific expedition, said he was worried the species would go extinct in Malaysia as its habitat was outside a forest reserve.

"This species, also found in southern Thailand, can vanish anytime if not preserved, or if the land is developed," he said at the closing ceremony of the expedition at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK).

Zulhazman said, apart from the Rafflesia, the expedition conducted research on various rare flora and fauna.

"The research and its findings will be exhibited in September and documented for reference and further research," he said.

Meanwhile, UMK Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zainai Mohamed said the expedition was the first-ever by the university.

"As a new university, the exposure is vital for UMK students to encourage them to do more research," he said.

Dr Zainai said the expedition was also aimed at encouraging eco-tourism, especially that involving orang asli.

"Natural resources such as hot springs, waterfalls and orang asli arts and culture are aplenty in Lojing, and this be commercialised as tourism products," he said.

Six public universities participated in the expedition: UMS, UMK, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, International Islamic University of Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Global Environment Centre, a non-governmental organisation. — Bernama