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## World's second-largest Rafflesia found in Lojing

**GUA MUSANG:** The Rafflesia species having the world's second-largest flower was found in Lojing Highlands, near here, by a scientific group from six local universities.

This follows the discovery of the biggest Rafflesia flower in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

The scientific group said the area may be classified as an international tourist attraction if it was cared for by preserving its natural beauty.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) dean of the postgraduate research centre, Prof Datin Maryati Mohamed, said the stud-

ies were positive about developing a tourist centre in the highlands of Hulu Kelantan.

However, she said the matter rested on various agencies including the state and local community in placing priority on preventing the rare flowers from being destroyed.

"The Rafflesia was found on a steep slope at 1,300m above sea level and can draw tourists if the area is declared as restricted," Maryati told reporters in Lojing recently.

She was asked to comment on the findings of the Lojing Highlands Scientific Expedition

on its 12th day.

The 103-strong expedition had lecturers and students from six universities including UMS, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), Universiti Putra Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Maryati, who is joint organiser with UMK, said the Rafflesia had interesting features, as its blooms were 57cm to 70cm across.

She said the Rafflesia in Indonesia could grow up to 150cm across.

"When the agencies and locals accept that this area is rich in flora

and fauna, there will be a greater love for it.

"Orang asli in the area may have a wealth of knowledge on the medicinal values of the many plants found here," Maryati said.

She said the natural beauty of the area near Cameron Highlands in Pahang, with access from Simpang Pulai in Perak and Gua Musang in Kelantan, gave it much tourism potential.

"Developing the area into a tourism spot will bring much benefit to the orang asli who can serve as guides and sell their handicraft for income," she said.  
— Bernama