

## Voodoo lily, snake lily, devil's tongue



*Amorphophallus riveri* (synonym *A. konjac* and *Tapeinophallus riveri*) -  
amorpho = changing: during growth, the inflorescence is said to resemble a  
changing phallus.

Araceae - aroid family

Bulbous perennial; compound palmate leaves usually one leaf per bulb

Flowers in Winter or early Spring when leaf is absent.

Adult size: 36-60" tall, 36" width, flower stalk 60-72",

Mottled inflorescence with maroon spathe and beige spadix on top

Sub-tropical habitat, native to eastern Asia

Hardy to zone 7 (6 with protection or microclimate)

Full sun to part shade, rich organic soil

Typically develops into large colonies through offshoots

### Educational Points of Interest

- Large mature voodoo lily bulbs flower in Winter when leaves are absent. The inflorescence consists of the typical aroid spathe and spadix atop a long mottled stalk.
- Voodoo lily flower stalks arise from the bulbs and can quickly grow to 6 feet in about two weeks. The spathe unwraps to expose the tip of a

spadix. The male and female flowers are arranged in rows at the bottom of the spadix still covered by the spathe.

- The large flower uses thermogenesis to emit powerful scents and attract its pollinators, flies and beetles. Instead of a sweet scent, the fetid odor resembles a decaying rodent. Visually the inside of the spathe resembles flesh, which helps complete the deception. Another common name for the genus is corpse flower
- The mechanics of pollination involves trapping flies inside the spathe, coating them with pollen, and releasing them the next day to pollinate other voodoo lilies.
- Voodoo lily has chemical defenses against herbivory. The sap has chemicals that deter animals and insects from eating the leaves.
- Despite the toxins, voodoo lilies are cultivated, harvested, and processed as a food item in parts of southeastern Asia.
- Voodoo lilies produce many bulblets (actually small tubers) underground.
- Botanical interest, ease of cultivation, and production of bulblets make voodoo lily a good item for plant sales.



mottled stem in leaf



tuber sprouting