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Botanists find world's ugliest orchid – 21st December, 2020

Level 4

People think orchids epitomise beauty. These delicate and fragrant blooms are often in the centre of floral displays. However, botanists have just decided on the world's ugliest orchid. It was found last year in Madagascar. One saving grace for this orchid is its smell. The scientists say it has a beautiful rose-like fragrance. There are over 25,000 species of orchid, so it is likely that one or two might not be so beautiful.

A researcher described the "ugly" orchid as being, "not very attractive" and "fleshy looking". Scientists are excited because there could be more hiding in the forests not yet discovered. The bad news is that the new orchid is already on the endangered list. Another researcher warned of a "bleak reality". He said: "With two in five plants threatened with extinction, it is a race against time to find, identify, name, and conserve plants before they disappear."

Level 5

People believe orchids are the epitome of beauty. These colourful, delicate and fragrant blooms are often the centrepiece of floral displays. However, botanists from the Royal Botanic Gardens in the UK have just decided on the world's ugliest orchid. It was found last year in a forest in Madagascar. One saving grace for this newly-unearthed orchid is its smell. The scientists say the flower has a beautiful rose-like fragrance. There are over 25,000 individual species of orchid, so it is likely that one or two might not be so exquisite.

Researcher Johan Hermans described the "ugly" orchid. He said: "It's not very attractive...It's fleshy looking, red inside and brown on the outside." Scientists are excited at finding the plant. They believe there could be many more hiding in the undergrowth not yet discovered. The bad news for the new orchid is that it is already considered to be an endangered species. Researcher Martin Cheek warned of a "bleak reality". He said: "With two in five plants threatened with extinction, it is a race against time to find, identify, name, and conserve plants before they disappear."

Level 6

Many people believe orchids to be the epitome of beauty. The colourful, delicate and fragrant blooms of an orchid will be the centrepiece of any floral display. However, botanists have just decided on the world's ugliest orchid. The orchid family comprises more than 25,000 individual species, so there is every likelihood that one or two might not exude exquisiteness. A newly discovered variety has been awarded the label of the world's ugliest orchid by botanists at the Royal Botanic Gardens in the UK. It was found last year in a forest in Madagascar. One saving grace for the newly-unearthed plant is its smell. The scientists say the flower has a beautiful, musky, rose-like fragrance.

The 'ugly' orchid has been named "gastrodia agnicellus". Researcher Johan Hermans said: "It's not very attractive, I must say. It's fleshy looking, red inside and brown on the outside." However, scientists are excited at finding the plant because they believe there could be many more lurking in the undergrowth yet to be discovered. The bad news for the gastrodia is that even though it has just turned up, it is already considered to be an endangered species. Researcher Martin Cheek warned: "The bleak reality facing us cannot be underplayed. With two in five plants threatened with extinction, it is a race against time to find, identify, name, and conserve plants before they disappear."