

The Tree with Nothing to Offer But Rot

The chempedak tree is found in Malaysia and is closely related to jackfruits in the mulberry family. The chempedak tree produces edible fruits that are about a foot long.

Researchers studying the chempedak were surprised to discover that it blooms irregularly. One tree was watched by researchers for five years before it bloomed! While the flowers smell like watermelon, they offer no nectar to entice pollinating insects. Moreover, the insects that do pollinate the chempedak tree do not eat any of the pollen. What, then, attracts the two species of gall midges that pollinate the flowers?

The answer: a fungus that attacks only the male flowers of the tree. The midges like to eat the fungus, so they crawl on the male flowers as they eat the fungus, picking up pollen. Then they go to the clumps of female flowers looking for more fungus, inadvertently pollinating them.

This arrangement, in which the tree depends entirely on a fungus to attract pollinators, is unknown in any other species. This raises the question of how such an arrangement could have evolved. Without both the midges and the fungus, the first chempedak tree would have been the last. All three elements in this interrelated system had to have come into being at the same time.

The chempedak tree bears witness to a rapid creation of the interdependent plant and insect world where living things had to wait, at most, mere days for the other creatures it depends on to come into existence, just as Genesis reports.

Genesis 1:11b

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth ... and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”

Prayer: Dear Father, with the creation I will bear witness that You are Creator. Amen.

Ref: Science News, "Tree pollination needs male-only rot"