



SEED CAPSULE MATURITY

Estimating the ripening time of a seed capsule is a difficult task. Many an amateur and professional hybridizer have had the disappointment of finding the seed-capsule of that 'desired' cross, had split and its content scattered to the wind.

There are many factors that come into play regarding the ripening of a seed capsule, time of year, weather conditions during maturation of the pod, the fertility of a cross, etc, etc.

After fertilisation, seed development can be gauged by the swelling and ripening of the developing seed-capsule, which may take a few weeks or occasionally as long as a year or more depending on the genera. As seed-capsules ripen they change colour from green to yellow or brown then split to release their seed into the air. It is recommended that when the seed-capsule begins to yellow at its end it is ripe for harvesting and sending to the seed bank.

If you are unsure how close the time is for the capsule to begin to split, try tying tissue paper or using an empty tea bag over the pod a few weeks beforehand and examine it from day to day.

Below is a list of the expected time for ripening of seed capsules. This list is an approximate guide only and may be of assistance to new growers.

Genus	Approximate days for ripening	Genus	Approximate days for ripening	Genus	Approximate days for ripening
Ascocentrum	150 - 170 days	Laelia	140 - 160 days	Phalaenopsis	130 - 140 days
Bulbophyllum	80 - 120 days	Leptotes	120 - 140 days	Phragmipedium	180 - 190 days
Cattleya	160 - 180 days	Masdevallia	100 - 110 days	Pleurothallis	45 - 50 days
Cymbidium	250 - 310 days	Maxillaria	130 - 150 days	Renanthera	180 - 200 days
Dendrobium	160 - 180 days	Miltonia	145 - 160 days	Sarcochilus	200 - 210 days
Encyclia	160 - 180 days	Oncidium	100 - 130 days	Restrepia	50 - 80 days
Epidendrum	130 - 145 days	Paphiopedilum	150 - 170 days	Sophronitis	100 - 120 days