

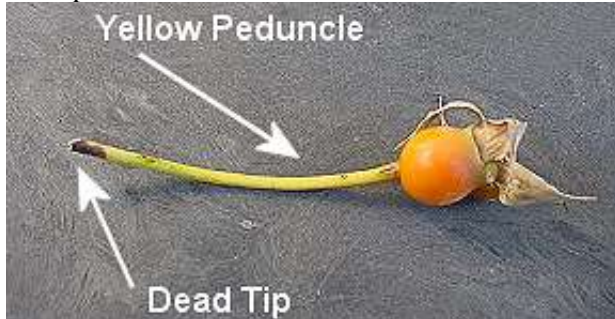
2007 Award of Merit Winner

Hybridizing for Fun

By Gail Trimble

The Long Vigil

Once you have applied pollen, it is simply a matter of waiting for the hip to mature. This usually occurs between 90 and 120 days, with sunny weather being more responsible for hip maturity than time. During this period of hip maturity, vigilance is necessary because the peduncle will eventually die where it is attached to the stem and the hip will fall off.



If a hip falls off before it has matured, you can try to ripen it by placing it in water in the house in a sunny window.

FAILURE OF HIPS

Hips can fail for many reasons. Fertilizing the seed parent can cause hips to fall off. Squirrels, birds, rodents, and all sorts of varmints love to eat them. One of the parents might be sterile or might not be a match due to chromosome count or “ploidy”. Ploidy is the number of homologous chromosome sets present in a cell. Modern roses are mostly “tetraploids” which have 28 chromosomes. Many older roses are diploids and have 14 chromosomes or triploids with 21. Frequently, attempts to cross roses with different ploidies result in hips that fail.



Hip with exogenous seeds

HIP MATURITY

Although most hips will turn yellow, orange, or red when mature, some will stubbornly remain green. As the hip ages, sometimes the sepals will dry and separate from the hip. Some hips will have “exogenous” seeds, meaning seeds that form on the outside of the hip as in the previous photo. Although some of the seeds in this case are burnt by the sun, many of the embryos inside will still be viable. Occasionally a hip will split and though many of the seeds will dry out, some might still be worth harvesting



Split hip



Hip with dead seeds inside

If moisture gets inside the hip, as in the photo above, the seeds may all turn brown and die. The most important thing to remember is to harvest the hips before they get mushy as once that happens the seeds inside most certainly will have died. Also, be sure to pick all hips before the first frost.