

## Buckwheat Seed Ripening


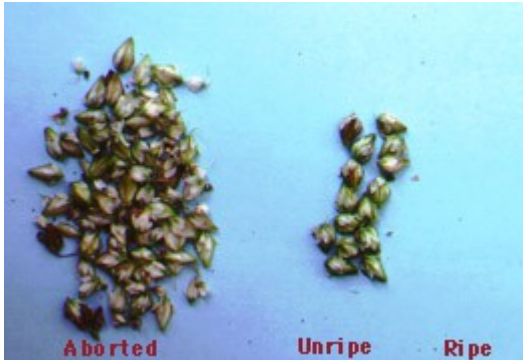




Buckwheat should ideally be harvested when about 70% of the filled kernels are ripe. Final ripening happens quickly, so it is useful to know what the plants look like as they ripen.

This page shows the ripening of buckwheat seed. The plants look different if there are a lot of aborted seeds, so these are shown separately.

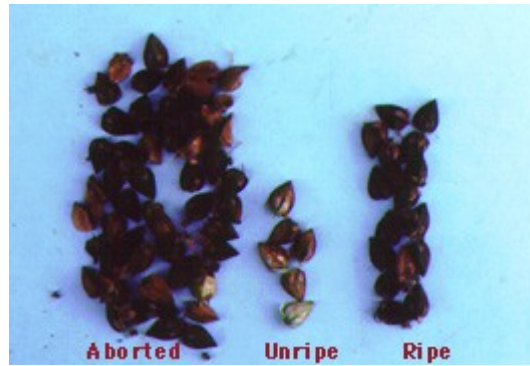
The seeds are sorted into three piles: aborted, unripe, and ripe.

### Example 1: Plants with many aborted seeds

It is common for buckwheat to set too many seeds, then abort the extra ones when the seeds begin to fill. The empty kernels begin to brown early but are a lighter color than mature filled kernels, so they can throw off visual estimates of maturity. An abundance of empty kernels makes it difficult to estimate yields. Many aborted kernels can be associated with high yields as well as poor ones.

| Comment  | Plant   | Sorted Seeds   |
|----------|---|--|
| 0% ripe  |   |   |
| 4% ripe  |  |  |
| 42% ripe |  |  |

75% ripe



Notice how the 75% ripe seeds don't look like they are ready to harvest, when in fact, they are. Compare them to the 43% ripe seeds below, which look similar, but are not ready.

**Example 2: Few aborted seeds**

Under certain growing conditions, the plants stop flowering as soon as the crop is set and the seeds begin to fill. In this situation, almost all of the seeds are full. Filled kernels that are not quite ripe can be mistaken for aborted kernels from a distance.

**Comment Plant**

**Sorted Seeds**

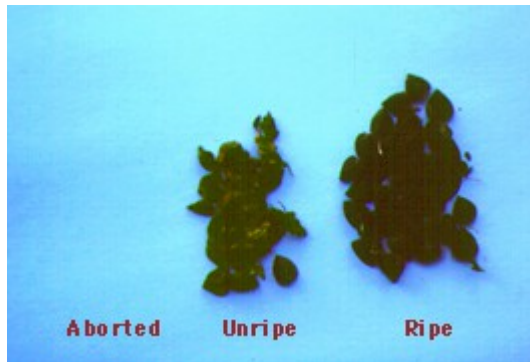
34% ripe



44% ripe



70% ripe



Notice how the 44% ripe seeds look dark, but are not quite ready.