

Ramp Life Cycle - From *"Having Your Ramps and Eating Them Too"* by Glen Facemire Jr.

March:

- Growth starts when soil reaches 45 F
- Leaf tip pointed to push through floor/debris
- Early growth browsed by deer, turkey - will stunt but not kill
- 2" leaves by end of March

April:

- Spring rains and warm temps. - lead to 1/2" growth per day
- Late snows/freezing temps. have little negative effect
 - Leaves don't wilt/burn from frost/freeze
 - Don't harvest/handle when frost/snow on leaves - causes spoilage
- Ramps at peak flavor and tenderness by mid-month
 - Freeze or can at this stage
- Flavor diminishes quickly after April

May:

- Plants reach full maturity
- Leaves start to yellow from the tips - eventually turning golden brown
- Seed stalks start to emerge from center between leaves
- Harvest now for pickling/dehydrating - before seed stalk gets hard/dry

June:

- Leaves completely gone
- Ramp flowering stalks reach full size with buds getting ready to bloom
- Only mature ramps will flower - immature ramps stay underground
- Blooms have no aroma - pollinated by bees, ants, insects
- Drought or excessive rain may damage flowers and prevent seed set
- Some flower blooms don't produce seeds - Believed to be the male blooms?
- By end of June green seed nodules start showing

July:

- Seeds growing - critical stage - excess moisture will cause rot - drought will prevent maturing

August:

- Transitional point - stalks drying up reducing moisture inputs to seed
- Green seed nodules bursting open showing black coated seeds inside
- Nodules continue to open as they dry out
- 60-70% of seeds ready to pick by end August, but best to wait until September
- Seed production/yields tend to spike every 3 or so years

September:

- Mid-Sept. best time to gather seeds
- Seeds fully exposed - black and shiny like a BB

October:

- Bulb becomes very hard - not used for eating
- Can harvest and transplant now if desired
- Plant seeds

November:

- Ramp consists of 5 rings and a heart - the ramp that exists now will completely deteriorate and a new 5 rings and heart will be produced by January
- Bulb continues to change underground - shedding outer layers and a new heart starts growing
- Outer layers start to deteriorate - seed stalk to moves to the outer edge of bulb
- A new heart will be developing and will be next years' seed stalk

December:

- Break time
- Can harvest bulbs as planting stock now to slow growth
Store in fridge at 38 F

January:

- Bulbs have completed their transformation - flower stalk now on outside of bulb
- About 1/3 of the original size

February:

- Best time for harvesting bulbs for transplanting
- Considered delicacy for eating - flavor concentrated into little bundle