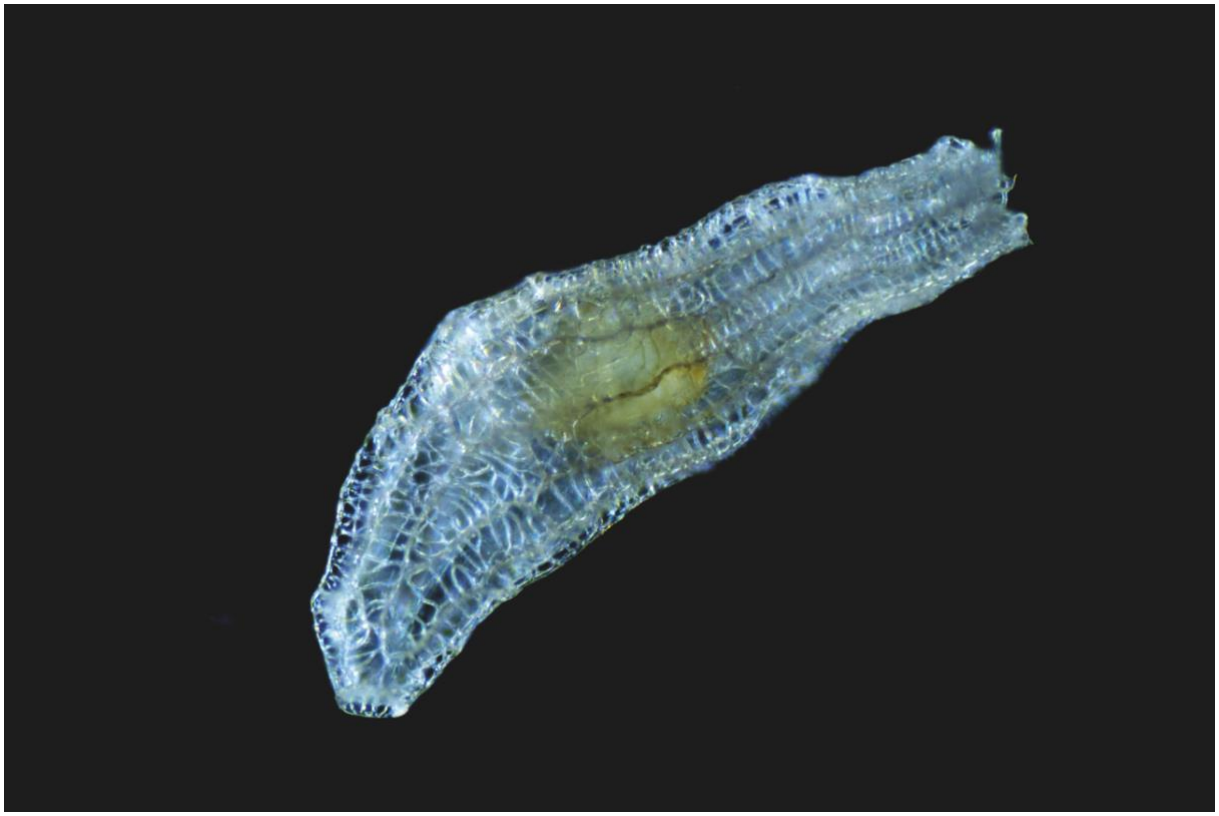
Orchid Pollinium:
Two pollinia composed of individual pollen grains. A stalk (caudicle) holds the pollinia.
A sticky disc (viscidium) attaches the pollinium to the pollinator.

1: What Is a Pollinium?

Orchids produce enormous amounts of seeds – ranging from thousands to over a million from a single flower. Each seed is the result of the fertilization of an ovule by pollen. Therefore, if an orchid produces, for example, a million seeds, it must ensure the transfer of a corresponding number (a million) of pollen grains. Loose pollen grains, which stick to pollinators individually as is common in most plants, are insufficient for this task. Instead, orchids bind their pollen grains into compact masses that are transferred as a whole. Sometimes, the pollinator ends up carrying a structure larger than itself. These pollen clumps are called pollinia.



1. Orchid seeds are extremely tiny, yet numerous.


1 mm


mm t

2. Orchid pollinia can have various structures.

3. A butterfly with pollinia from the orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* attached to its proboscis.