

HOW TO OPEN NODULE

You cannot tell what may be in a nodule from looking at the outside, although some collectors with years of practice may be able to make a reasonable guess. In order to see the fossil, you need to break open the nodules. There are several ways to do this.

Some people use a rock hammer to open nodules. Although this method is fast, it frequently causes nodules to break in a way that do not expose the entire fossil.

Another common method used to open nodules is alternate freezing and thawing. Nodules are placed in a bucket of water. After they have soaked for several days (to get water into the nodule), the bucket and nodules are placed in the freezer. When the water has completely frozen, the bucket is removed from the freezer and the water is allowed to thaw. The freezing and thawing cycle is repeated. Between freezing, nodules that open should be removed and other nodules can be tapped (with a hammer or on a hard surface) to see if they will open. After about 10 cycles, allow the modules to dry completely. Then repeat the whole process. Most nodules that will open will do so in about 25 cycles or less. Other nodules can be opened with a hammer.