

SHIITAKE KIT GROWING INSTRUCTIONS

Your mushroom kit contains the living roots of the delicious **shiitake** mushroom. Called the mycelium, these roots are the white substance you see, and they are already growing on oak sawdust and woodchip substrate (the block that the mushrooms grow on). The mushrooms will fruit from the mycelium. Don't be alarmed; the mycelium is healthy, safe, and normal! Growing your own gourmet mushrooms is easy. With proper care and attention, your kit will produce a total of 2-2 ½ lbs. of delicious **shiitake** mushrooms.

Follow these simple steps and soon you will be enjoying your first flush of gourmet mushrooms!

- **1: CHECK DATE ON BAG:** Look at the date written on the white square (filter patch) located on the top of the bag. You will see "Shi" for shiitake and the date the kit was created, written in month-day format; for instance, "Shi 12-31" means this shiitake kit was created on December 31. Determine if 40 calendar days have passed since the date written on the white square patch. If it has been more than 40 days, proceed to step 2. *If it has been less than 40 days, place the bag in a dark place (such as in a cabinet or back in the box) until it has been 40 days, then proceed to step 2.*
- **2: COLD TEMPERATURE INITIATION:** Begin the initiation of mushroom production by placing your entire mushroom kit (still in the sealed bag with the white square filter patch) in your refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. This mimics the cooling of the weather in nature and triggers the block into fruit body production, also called a "flush." Be careful to avoid placing the block directly against the back wall or wall adjacent to the freezer section of your refrigerator; the piping for the freezer generally runs through this area and could cause part of the block to freeze, thus damaging the mycelium (the roots of the mushroom).
- **3: SUBMERGE IN WATER:** After 3-5 days in the refrigerator, strip off the entire bag and submerge the mushroom block in a bucket or large pot of non-chlorinated water for 4 hours. You will need something to weigh down the block to keep it from floating. You can remove chlorine from your water in one of two ways: by filling a pot or bucket and let it sit out, uncovered, for 24 hours allowing the chlorine to dissipate or by boiling the water for 10 minutes, making sure the water has cooled to room temperature before using. Do not use distilled water (which lacks minerals) or rainwater caught from a roof or gutters (which contains many contaminants). Well water works nicely.
- **4: PLACE IN AN IDEAL LOCATION:** After the **shiitake** block has soaked for 4 hours, place it on a plate or tray to catch excess water run-off. Place the block and plate on an easy-to-clean, water-resistant surface, such as a counter top. Lighting that is sufficient to read by is also sufficient for the shiitake to grow as long as it is *not direct sunlight*. Indirect sunlight seems to be best, but fluorescent or incandescent lighting will work also. We suggest that you choose a location for your kit that you frequently pass by so you will remember to mist the block and enjoy watching the growing process. Kitchen counters work well. This species of **shiitake** is geared toward a **temperature range of 60-75 degrees** Fahrenheit. If the **shiitake** block is kept outside of this temperature range, mushroom production might not occur.
- **5: PLACE UNDER THE HUMIDITY TENT:** Once in the ideal location, cover the block with the humidity tent provided with your kit. This is the clear long plastic bag with many ½ inch holes. This bag will be used to maintain humidity and moisture and to allow for some air exchange through the holes. "Fluff" the bag (puff it out), then roll the open end of the bag up 3-4 times (much like you would a pant leg) so that the top of the tent is about 6 inches above the top of the block when covered. Place the humidity tent over the block and arrange so there is space on all sides between the block and the tent (see photo).
- **6: MIST:** Use the mister included in your kit to mist non-chlorinated water directly onto the block 2-3 times per day. You can remove chlorine from your water in one of two ways: by filling a pot or bucket and let it sit out, uncovered, for 24 hours allowing the chlorine to dissipate or by boiling the water for 10 minutes, making sure the water has cooled to room temperature before using. Do not use distilled water (which lacks minerals) or rainwater caught from a roof or gutters (which contains many contaminants). Well water works nicely. Mist the inside of the humidity tent and replace it immediately over the block. There should always be condensation droplets on the inside of the humidity tent. If not, mist more often. **This step is very important, as the mushrooms grow faster and larger in high humidity.**
- **7: WATCH YOUR MUSHROOMS GROW!** In approximately 3-14 days of misting and keeping the block under the humidity tent, you will start to see primordial (small) mushrooms beginning to form on the shiitake block. The shiitake mushrooms can grow to be quite large. If the mushrooms grow so large that they begin pushing on the humidity tent, remove the tent and mist the block, but avoid misting the actual mushrooms themselves, as this could cause them to become waterlogged. Your mushrooms will grow rapidly; in approximately one week after primordial formation, they will be ready to harvest.



If more than 14 days have passed since misting began without primordial formation, the window of opportunity for the *first flush* might have passed. Don't worry! Your kit will still produce. Simply restart the block by beginning at step 9, starting with letting it sit uncovered for 10-14 days, then soak, etc.

- **8: HARVEST:** The best time to harvest the mushrooms is when the mushroom caps are still slightly curled under. If the cap flattens out, harvest right away, as this is an indication that it is preparing to start producing spores. (The spores are harmless but indicate that the mushroom is passing its prime.) Cut the stem of the mushrooms as close to the block as possible with a clean knife. The mushrooms may mature at different times, so cut them individually when they are ready. If you see a white powder on the side of the bag and/or plate, the mushroom is simply dropping its seeds. This is normal and safe. Harvest your mushrooms right away. If you want to wait to enjoy your harvest, you can store your shiitake for up to a week in a closed paper bag in the refrigerator.
- **9: EAT AND ENJOY!** You will soon see why **shiitake** is the world's best selling gourmet mushroom. Remember to always cook your mushrooms before eating (for more detailed information, see our Blog article *The Importance of Cooking Mushrooms*, March 2013). For a collection of recipes, refer to our website under **FAQ-Recipes**. We will be adding new recipes monthly to our **Blog** so be sure to check back for more ways to cook your mushrooms. To learn about the medicinal benefits or nutritional information of your mushrooms, refer to our website under **Learn-Medicinal Benefits** or **Learn-Nutritional Information**.
- **10: GROW MORE MUSHROOMS:** To obtain more flushes (another cycle of mushrooms), let the block sit uncovered (not under the humidity tent) to rest in a cool, dry place for 10-14 days. After the rest period, poke three to four 4-inch deep holes in the block using a clean skewer. Soak the block again under water in a large pot or bucket for 4 hours in *non-chlorinated water*. (Refer to the instructions in step 5 to review how to remove chlorine from the water). You will need something to weigh down the block to keep it from floating. After soaking the mushroom kit for 4 hours, you will need to let the excess water drain completely from the block. From this point, repeat the growing process again, starting with the instructions at Step 4. You will get a second flush of mushrooms, generally a third flush, and occasionally a fourth. Each flush that the shiitake produces can vary widely in size and quantity. For example, the first flush may consist of 4-15 mid-size mushrooms or 1-2 large ones, and the second flush may be completely the opposite. It is not predictable, and part of the fun is seeing what each flush will bring.

As the mushroom block ages, its immune defenses will weaken and at any time in the process you might notice spots of discoloration (mold contamination), most commonly a green mold, as you would see on old bread. Do not worry: this will not cause your mushrooms to become harmful to eat. In fact, this can easily be remedied by spraying the contaminated spot(s) with a mixture of 10 parts water and 1 part 3% hydrogen peroxide. (Inexpensive bottles of hydrogen peroxide can be found at most pharmacies and grocery stores.) Spraying the spots a few times will kill the mold but will not harm the mycelium. The spots can also be removed manually by cutting them out carefully with a clean knife.

- **11: COMPOST THE FINISHED KIT:** You will know when your kit is finished producing when you see no mushroom growth at all. Once the mushrooms have completely finished growing from the block, you can compost it. The broken down substrate is a fantastic addition to any compost pile! Save the reusable humidity tent and sprayer for your next kit!

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? We understand that growing your own mushrooms at home may be a new experience for you, and you may have additional questions about your kit. Therefore, we have created a list of additional questions and answers on our website under **FAQ**.

LEARNING AND HARVESTING VIDEOS: Learn how to grow and harvest your mushrooms by watching one of our videos on YouTube. You can access the video on the **FAQ>Growing Instructions** page of our website or on our YouTube channel at [100th Monkey Mushrooms](#).

TO ORDER MORE KITS: To view other mushroom kit offerings or to place an order, visit us at www.100thMonkeyMushrooms.com and look at our page of **Products**. Or, call us 512-820-0001 to place a phone order. We do ship within the continental United States. **WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR MUSHROOM GROWING EXPERIENCE!**