

If you have problems with the MiniFarm

Your MiniFarm will produce mushrooms if the instructions are carefully followed. Direct sunlight, exposure to heat, and excessive drying can all damage or destroy the living culture of the Shiitake mushroom (a species of *Lentinus edodes*), so avoid these conditions. Sometimes the appearance of the mushrooms will follow a different rhythm than the one described above; if this happens, watch patiently. If you experience a problem with excessive drying during one crop, just remove the affected mushroom, mist well, reclose the bag, and the next crops should be fine. If the drying was caused by too-drafty condition, give the MiniFarm more protection, such as hanging a plastic sheet to block the wind. If blue-green mold growth occurs on the MiniFarm remove the affected area with a knife making shallow cuts, and throw the contaminated portion away, and continue with the general instructions in that stage of development. If mold growth occurs on a large portion of the block remove the block from the bag and allow it to dry for 2 days. Once the block is dry add 1 cap full of bleach to 3 gallons of water (a sink full), fully submerge the block into the bleach overnight. After, allow the outer surface of the MiniFarm to dry (one day) before returning it to a clean, dry bag. Once soaked, the block might have an excess of moisture, it may help to open the top of the bag for days to ensure mold doesn't reoccur.

Before doing anything drastic or letting too much time pass (5 weeks) please feel free to contact us for additional instructions.

The Garrone family of Far West Fungi would like to thank you for choosing us as your source for mushroom products. You can find more of our mushroom products online.

[www.farwestfungi.com](http://www.farwestfungi.com)

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## **Shiitake Mushroom (*Lentinus edodes*)**

You now possess a pre-activated Shiitake Mushroom MiniFarm that will begin producing its first of several crops of delicious Shiitake mushrooms in the next week or two. A lot of care and pride went into this hand-crafted product, and we hope you will enjoy growing your own fresh organic Shiitake mushrooms.

You can expect to produce a new crop of Shiitake mushrooms once a month for the next three to six months by carefully following these simple instructions. This MiniFarm is exactly identical to thousands of others in production on our mushroom farm. We use a process developed to yield as many mushrooms as possible, therefore our MiniFarms are very reliable. This growing kit is a specially formulated mixture of red oak sawdust and rice bran which has been fully impregnated with the culture ("mycelium") of the Shiitake Mushroom, which gives the substrate block its white and brown color. With care, and under good conditions, they should produce up to a pound of these gourmet delicacies. Read these instructions carefully now, from start to finish!

### MiniFarm Preparation

Immediately take your MiniFarm out of the box remove the twist tie , balloon the bag out and re-tie it at the top of the bag, make about 10 x-shaped holes ( ¼ to ½” across) in the upper part of the bag. The small holes you make will allow the mushroom culture to breathe without drying out the MiniFarm. Make sure that there is a good amount of air flow about the block.

### Pre-Growth Storage

Leave the MiniFarm in its bag and place it in an indoor spot where it will receive some indirect light and will also be protected from heat and drafts (bathroom, den, laundry room). Although the Shiitake mushroom can tolerate temperatures between 32° – 85°F (or somewhat warmer for short periods) , the very best results will occur between 50° – 65°F. Above 70° the mushroom will appear unpredictably, and may be of lesser quality, so try to locate a cool spot for your MiniFarm.

### Storage when MiniFarm is Growing

Watch your MiniFarm daily for the first signs of activity. Within a week or two you will begin to see some swellings that will soon grow to resemble small, round mushrooms. These will typically appear on the upper surface of the substrate, and frequently on the sides of the block. When the Shiitake caps are about ½” across, you can remove the twist tie and open the top of the bag (3 to 4 inch). The developing mushrooms need to breathe more oxygen at this time, and they also need room to grow. The mushrooms must not dry out so only open the bag wide enough to give the mushrooms room to swell to full size. If you live in an arid climate, or if your house is regularly heated, you may need to take extra precautions to keep the humidity up. Use a spray bottle to mist the inside walls of the bag (not on the block directly) two or three time a day to help increase humidity before harvesting. **Do not** allow water to accumulate on the bottom of the bag, this will cause mold to grow. If a brown liquid accumulates at the bottom of the bag it may be best to change to a clean, dry growing bag.

### Harvesting

The shiitake mushroom will take only a few days to reach full size. They are ready to harvest when the cottony white veil beneath the cap has fully broken away from the stem. They are now at their flavorful prime, and according to Japanese tradition their healthful properties are also at their highest potency. Pick them now before they fully open, twist and pull off at base of stem. Your Shiitake crop can be stored in the

refrigerator for up to two weeks in a brown paper bag until you are ready to eat them, but they are delicate mushrooms and are definitely at their best when fresh off the MiniFarm.

### Second and Third Flush Production

After the first crop has been harvested reclose the bag and allow the Shiitake MiniFarm to rest for three to four weeks, checking it regularly for new growth. Mushroom may appear at any time, but in general the MiniFarm will just rest. If no new mushroom appear after four weeks, lift the block 3” above its resting place and thump it down three times (not too hard). When you see your MiniFarm beginning to produce its next crop of shiitake mushrooms follow the above steps just as you did for the first crop. If with time the bag becomes tattered, simply remove the block from the old bag, and place it in the extra clean bag that came with your MiniFarm. Our MiniFarm will typically produce three or more crops when the above steps are followed.

### Soaking the MiniFarm

With time your MiniFarm may lose so much moisture that it will stop producing Shiitake Mushrooms. If 8 weeks pass without a new crop emerging, you can try this: Use a sharp knife to make some long, ¼”-deep incisions on all sides of the MiniFarm. Submerge the MiniFarm block into a bowl or in the sink of cold water overnight, with a 5 lb weigh on the block. After allowing the block to drain for ten minutes, return it to a clean bag. This treatment often produces one or more late crops.

### Block Disposal

Even with the best of care, the MiniFarm will eventually have transformed its entire food reserve into the shiitake Mushroom you have enjoyed. Retire it to your garden where it will enrich your soil. Should you wish to get another Mushroom MiniFarm we have more Shiitake, and if you would like to try something new we have a Tree Oyster Mushroom MiniFarm as well.