



PADDY STRAW MUSHROOM CULTIVATION

The paddy straw mushroom is one of the world's five most cultivated and consumed mushrooms. It grows in an egg shape before opening and revealing the gills. It has a soft and musky taste.

In Asia, it is cultivated on slightly fermented rice straw, hence its name, or on other agricultural residues. It often provides peasants with an important secondary revenue since its cultivation is not very costly and requires only agricultural waste, often produced in-situ.

Substrate

The best substrate in our context is slightly fermented straw mixed with 5% of wheat bran. Non composted straw can also work but will produce significantly less.

To prepare the straw, soak in water for twelve hours. Remove, drain excess water, place into a heap, and cover with a plastic tarp. Stir twice a week to allow uniform composting.

Outdoor Cultivation

Make a one metre square heap of 30cm high with the composted straw and 5% wheat bran distributing evenly the block of mycelium among the substrate. Cover with a transparent plastic sheet to create a hot and humid mini greenhouse. The ideal conditions for fruiting are 28 - 32°C with a humidity of 80%. Make sure the mycelium has proper aeration by leaving an opening on both sides. Allow enough space between the substrate and the plastic for mushroom growth.

Water on a regular basis. After 10 to 20 days, the mushrooms should start to appear. At this stage, gently water the young mushrooms without damaging them.

Harvesting

For best results, harvest mushrooms when in button (egg shape), before the gills are visible. After the first flush, water the heap generously and cover with plastic. The second flush, much less abundant than the first, can be expected 7 to 14 days later.

WARNING: The paddy straw mushroom can be similar in appearance to certain deadly amanitas. Always be sure that the mushroom you are eating is the right one. The paddy straw mushroom does not have a ring around the stem and has a pink spore print, while the deadly amanitas have a white spore print.