



Shiitake

(*Lentinula edodes*) cultivation

General

The culture bag contains mushroom tissue (mycelium), sawdust (to feed the mycelium), grain, water, and calcium sulfate. It can be stored in the fridge for up to one month, after which the mushrooms should start growing inside the bag.

Shiitake development requires light and fresh air but not direct sunlight or drafts, as these tend to be drying should be avoided because they tend to dry the fungus: natural light or fluorescent light up to three meters away is fine.

Optimal fruiting temperature: 16 - 20°C, does not tolerate freezing.

Instructions:

1. For the first crop, do not open the bag until mushroom buttons (small round 'bumps' of mushrooms) begin to appear. Hitting the block firmly without breaking it will stimulate their emergence. Once the buttons have emerged, create incisions in the surrounding plastic to provide room for the mushrooms to expand.
2. Put 2 cm of perlite (optional) in the bottom of a large container such as an aquarium or plastic container and saturate with water. Place the mycelium block on the perlite. If not using perlite, elevate the mycelium block on a platform above the water. The mycelium block should not come into direct contact with water.
3. If humidity is low mist the walls of the container as needed. Avoid misting the block directly. New mushrooms should begin forming one to two weeks later
4. Harvest the mushrooms once the caps have fully opened, but before the mushroom cap edges curl upward.
5. After harvesting all the mushrooms, place the block in the refrigerator for a dormancy period of at least 8 hours. Before returning to Step 2, completely remove the plastic bag, and drench the mycelium block in water for a few hours. Drain well to remove any excess water.
6. The cycle can be repeated up to 3 times until no more mushrooms appear.