

Mushroom Grow Bag

Shiitake (Lentinula edodes)

Difficulty Level = **Intermediate**

Your Mushroom Grow Bag has been sealed with 5 lbs of sterilized spawn-inoculated substrate. Over time, the mycelium will grow, emitting CO₂ in the process. When your bag arrives it may be inflated or become inflated but the filter patch on the bag allows for some gaseous exchange while preventing contamination, so it won't over-inflate.

In ideal conditions each mushroom bag's beginning **dry** substrate weight (~ 2 lbs) equals the weight that you should get in mushrooms! Yum!



Be sure to follow the directions carefully!

Storing your bag

Store your bag unopened at room temperature. **Do not open the bag until the mycelium has completely taken over the block! Shiitake must "bark" inside the sealed bag.**

Your bag is ready to open when the entire surface of the block has taken on a roughened texture, called "popcorning" or "barking". It will be white with brown splotches, feel firm to the touch and hold its shape within the bag. The bag will also contain a liquid that can range in color from pale to dark brown.

This process can take up to three months from spawning date. Your shiitake may arrive ready to fruit, or it may need more time to fully develop.

Remember: The bag contains a living organism and can die if you neglect it too long. Once the mycelium have spread throughout the bag, the fungi needs moisture, light and fresh air.



A great example of what "barking" looks like on a fruiting bag

Fruiting your bag

1. If your bag is ready to fruit (see above), then slap the bag hard with your hand about once on each side. The shock will trigger fruiting!
2. Cut off the entire bag.
3. Rinse the block with cold tap water and drape it with the fabric provided.
4. Set the block on a terracotta pot, or a cookie drying rack. Mushrooms need light and consistent humidity so keep your block somewhere you'll see it often, like the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room. If the bottom of the block is on a solid surface, it will start to grow mold.

5. Drape the fabric over the block and mist the fabric a couple of times a day to keep it damp. If your block is not yet fruiting, water really well every other day.
6. **Keep the fabric misted** and wait for the mushrooms to grow! (This may happen quickly or it may take a few weeks) Watch out - the mushrooms may try to grow through the fabric.
7. To harvest, twist & pull right where they come off the block. Do not cut into the block.
8. Second flush: After the first harvest, soak the block by submerging it in water for 24-36 hours. Remove block, “slap” and more mushrooms will eventually grow off the same block! If it doesn't seem to be fruiting, sometimes a cold shock will trigger more mushrooms to form. You can stick the block outside (in the winter) or in the fridge for a day or two.

Follow directions below for more information about caring for your bag!

Humidity: High humidity is essential for growing healthy mushrooms. Moisten the enclosed polyester woven fabric and keep it draped over your open mushroom bag at all times. Mist the fabric with a spray bottle a couple of times a day to keep it damp. You can also increase humidity by placing the block in a loosely covered plastic tub containing a few inches of moistened peat moss, potting soil, sponges, perlite, or anything else that absorbs water and then tenting the fabric over it. Above all...do NOT let your block dry out!

Light: Light quality is important and the most commonly overlooked. The best is natural light through a window which is indirect. Other possible sources include florescent or LED lights.

Fresh Air and Temperature: Fresh air allows for normal development of most mushrooms. By cutting the bag off you are providing the spawn with plenty of fresh air to grow. Fruiting temperatures of between 50-75°F is ideal.

Harvesting & Cooking Notes: To harvest, twist and pull, trying not to damage the block in the process. DO NOT CUT INTO THE BLOCK (it can create contamination)! Cook until golden brown.

Once your mushroom block starts producing, it will be at its highest production during the first 3 months. Eventually though, your block will contaminate. This is normal and usually happens after the first or second flush. You might observe green or black mold, similar to what you would see on cheese or bread, growing on the surface of the block.

Of course, never consume a mushroom that you haven't positively identified!

Have questions, problems, or want more information on how to expand your bag after it is done fruiting?... Contact Chris Parker at ashevillefungi@gmail.com

