

# HARRIS® SEEDS

## MUSHROOM KIT INSTRUCTIONS

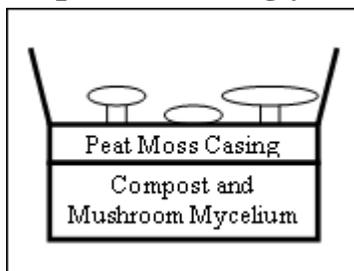
White Button, Giant Heirloom Portabella, Crimini-Baby Bella



This kit is designed to let you grow mushrooms inside your home. It contains all the necessary components to grow mushrooms over a 6 to 10 week period. All you need to do is follow the instructions below and you should have weeks of fun and enjoyment as you harvest one mushroom after another!

Generally, mushrooms will be ready to pick within 4 weeks after starting the kit. The first crop is the largest, consisting of 35 to 40% of your mushrooms. Each crop thereafter becomes smaller until the kit stops. The mushrooms fruit at intervals of approximately 10 to 15 days. Mushrooms fruit at temperatures 55-74°F (faster at warmer temperatures and slower at cooler temperatures). **The best quality and quantity of mushrooms are grown between 62-64°F.** Constant temperatures higher than 75°F usually prevent mushrooms from growing, and temperatures over 86°F can kill them. Temperatures below 55°F retard or stop the growth of mushrooms. The quantity of mushrooms a given kit produces can vary, and the larger the size of the mushrooms produced, the fewer of them will grow. Conversely, the smaller the size of the mushrooms, the more of them will grow.

### Steps for starting your kit



1. Inside the box kit there is a large bag of compost that has been inoculated with a white colored **mycelium** (a moldy looking fungus). Open the bag and remove the smaller bag of **casing**--dry peat moss mixed with a little calcium carbonate. Casing is used as a covering to hold water and protect the mushroom mycelium growing in the compost.

The compost may appear brown or may look frosty white or moldy as the mushroom mycelium grows. You will notice that the bag of compost is not sealed closed; this is to allow the mushroom fungus to breathe.

2. The kit is designed to be started within 21 days of the date stamped on the top of the box. If you delay starting, it may still grow, but fewer mushrooms will be produced. If you wish to delay starting your kit for a few weeks, close the box and store the kit below 50°F and above freezing.
3. Scratch the entire surface of the compost 1/2" deep. You can use a nail or fork to do this.
4. Next open the bag of dry casing, and add 1/2 cup of the scratched loose compost and 4 cups of room temperature tap water and mix. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes before applying it to the compost.
5. Now spread the wet casing mixture evenly over the entire surface of the compost. Do not pack the mixture down; leave it loose and fluffy. The casing mixture should cover all the compost, and be approximately 1" deep.

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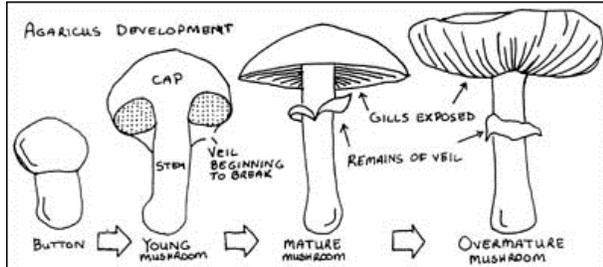
**HARRIS® SEEDS**

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6. Wait about 5 minutes and then scratch or ruffle the entire surface of the peat moss/compost to a depth of 3/4". A nail or fork can be used to ruffle the casing. The roughness creates a microclimate where the young mushrooms can form. It is important to leave the top of your mushroom kit open for air ventilation or no mushrooms will grow. This completes setting up your kit. It is a good idea to write the date you start your kit on the box.

## Growing Mushrooms



**Location:** Now that your kit is set up, the best location to grow will be a room where the temperature stays 60 -74°F. Keep the kit out of drafts and away from heat sources which will dry it out. The ideal fruiting temperature range for Portabella, Crimini, and White Button mushrooms is 62-64°F. The kit does not need to be kept in the dark, but

under no circumstance should you allow direct sun light to shine into your kit. The sunlight can dry out, overheat, and even kill your mushrooms.

**Water & Maintenance:** Keep the surface of the casing moist at all times without over watering. Do not let the casing dry out, as it is very hard to remoisten and mushrooms will not grow in dry casing. Do not cover the top of the kit to prevent it from drying out as this causes air circulation problems and high levels of carbon dioxide which prevent mushrooms from growing. The kit has no drainage and excessive watering will build up, flood and drown the mycelium. A moderate spray misting or sprinkling of water on the casing surface every other day is usually adequate. Water daily while mushrooms are fruiting and if the temperature is warmer than 70° F.

**Mushrooms begin to grow:** Within 14 days, you will notice the white mycelium beginning to grow, sometimes covering 20 to 30% of the surface; this is OK. Small 1/2" diameter mushrooms begin to form individually or in clusters. By days 21-28 some mushrooms may be ready to harvest if grown at 62-64°F. Mushrooms will just about double in size every day when they are young.

**Harvest your crop:** The mushrooms can be picked as buttons with closed caps or allowed to fully mature with caps open. A mushroom is mature and ready to pick when the thin veil covering the gills under the mushroom begins to tear open. The size of the mushroom has nothing to do with maturity; even small mushrooms should be picked when the veil tears open. To pick your mushrooms twist them a complete rotation in place and slowly pull them out of the casing, trying not to disturb the adjacent mushrooms. Do not cut the mushrooms off inside the kit, as this leaves a stem in the casing to rot. Once you have picked, continue regular watering. Within 14 days another crop of mushrooms will usually appear. Be patient, most kits produce two larger crops of mushrooms followed by a couple of smaller ones.

**End of production:** Your kit contains a fixed amount of nutrients. When these are used, the kit will stop producing mushrooms and the mycelium slowly dies. This begins around 10-12 weeks.

**Summary:** These instructions are general in nature. Mushroom variety, growing temperatures, and the individual care you provide will all affect the timing, success, and productivity of your kit. Enjoy growing and eating your fresh mushrooms!

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