

HARRIS® SEEDS

MUSHROOM KIT INSTRUCTIONS

Oyster (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)

Mushroom Kit Contents: Clear plastic bag liner, black bag with growing medium with Oyster (fungus), and instructions.

Steps for starting your kit

1. Open the box carefully. Open the clear plastic bag box liner to expose the black bag containing the growing medium and white mushroom mycelium.
2. Do not open the black bag. The black bag has holes in it and this is where the mushrooms will begin to grow. At this point you can decide one of two ways you want your mushrooms to grow:
 - a. The first is to leave the black bag inside the box and just start watering it. The mushrooms will fruit up and out of the holes facing upward.
 - b. The second way is to pull the black bag out of the box or just stand it up inside the shipping box and start watering it. These mushrooms will grow out from the sides of the bag and have a more natural shelf like appearance.
3. The clear bag liner should be pulled up over the black bag and left open at the top to let in air. The liner will become a draft barrier preventing the mushrooms from drying out and still allow fresh air to enter into the kit.

Growing mushrooms

You must provide the following growing conditions in order for your Oyster kit to produce mushrooms.

1. **Light** - Oyster mushrooms require light to grow. Place your kit in a well-lit area, but not in direct sun light. Regular strong reading light is sufficient. Constant light is not necessary. It is fine to leave your kit in the dark overnight.
2. **Temperature** - Your kit will grow mushrooms best at temperatures between 65 – 68°F. You may have to check around your house with a thermometer to find such a location. Your kit can also produce mushrooms between 55 – 74°F, but it will do better if kept in the 65-68 range.
3. **Water** - Water your kit by sprinkling or spray misting water on to the kit's surface once a day. In this case you will be watering the black plastic bag with the ¼ inch holes in it. When the small oyster mushrooms begin to force themselves out of the bag holes

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in 3-7 days, increase watering to 2-3 times a day. Leave the top of the box liner pulled up and open to allow air circulation. Air circulation is necessary for normal mushroom growth. The lack of fresh air will prevent mushrooms from growing and produce long stringy mushrooms. The liner will help keep some humidity around the fruiting mushrooms. Be careful not to over water your kit before the baby mushrooms are formed. Standing water in the bottom of your kit will encourage rot and contaminants to grow.

4. **Harvesting** - Under favorable conditions, mushrooms will begin to appear in 7 - 14 days. The mushrooms usually double in size every day. Pick them when they reach a mature size or when they stop growing. This usually takes 4-7 days after they first appear. Pick all of them off at this time by twisting them slowly one complete turn to free them from the growing medium. Be careful not to damage the growing mediums' surface. It is better not to cut the mushrooms off because this leaves a stump to rot, which can later inhibit the fruiting of the next crop.

5. **Caution** - Oyster mushrooms often start many small mushrooms to ensure some survive to adulthood. If too many mushrooms begin to grow the Oyster mushroom will abort all the extras. (Do not attempt to thin the small mushrooms.) Care should be taken when picking your mushrooms to ensure you are not picking aborted or old mushrooms. These aborted and old mushrooms are not edible. Only harvest and eat fresh looking mushrooms. All aborted and old mushrooms should be removed from the kit surface and discarded after every harvest. After you harvest the mushrooms keep the surface of the kit moist. Maintain your kit as before and wait for another crop of mushrooms. The most productive mushroom crops are usually the first and second. Subsequent mushroom fruiting may occur, over the following weeks, but fewer mushrooms will grow as time passes and the mushroom nutrients are used up. (Some varieties of oyster mushrooms only fruit one crop, but most will fruit 4-5 times.)

Cooking

To prepare your mushrooms for cooking remove the tough stem ends and slice the mushrooms up to the size of your thumb. The slices can then be sautéed in a little olive oil and butter with salt and pepper and a few garlic cloves for about 5-10 minutes or until brown around the edges.

Another recipe is to take the mushroom pieces and flour, egg and flour them. Then cook them in oil until the batter turns golden brown. Salt them lightly after cooking. It is best to cook Oyster mushrooms before eating them since some people have adverse reactions to eating raw Oyster mushrooms.

Enjoy growing and eating your own homegrown Oyster mushrooms!

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