

Oyster

(Pleurotus)

Welcome to the wonderful world of fungi! This instruction manual is intended to help guide you through your mushroom growing adventure, and if followed correctly will help you produce mushrooms worthy of any meal. So, you have your fruiting block. Now what?

1. Location

- a. Plan to put your mushroom block in an area you will remember to check every day. Oyster mushrooms will fruit between the temperatures of around 10C - 29C (blue, black & pearl: 10C-21C, pink & yellow: 21C-29C), so keep this in mind. This block should be placed in an area that receives **indirect light**. This is needed to initiate the pinning process. Do not place in direct sunlight.

The state at which mushrooms begin to form is referred to as "pinning".

2. Preparation

- a. Place your kit on a plate, or something that can catch the dripping water (that will inevitably occur when taking care of your mushrooms throughout this process). Using clean/sanitized scissors (or knife) cut a small "X" in one side of your bag (this is where the mushrooms will appear). We recommend cutting the "X" about 2" inches long. Note that pins may grow elsewhere-this is normal (for best results do NOT remove the tape/ziptie on top). You do not need to do anything if they are growing places besides where you put the "X". Sooner or later they find the "X" or abort.

3. Growing and Maintaining

- a. Mushrooms need a humid environment in order to thrive and produce fruit. This must be provided in order for your block to produce a "flush" of oysters. If you purchased a humidity tent with your kit, roll the bottom of the tent 2-3 times and fold out the top. The tent should now be capable of standing over top of your fruiting block. Be sure to leave space for your mushrooms to grow (where the "X" is). If you did not purchase a tent, you will need to find a way to maintain humidity, while allowing air exchange (very important). There are many ideas, and how-to videos online, using things such as totes, plastic, etc. to create a humid environment.

- b. To maintain humidity, spray the inside of the humidity tent 2-4 times a day (or as much as necessary, any time the walls are dry). Placing a damp paper towel (and redampening as needed) on the bottom around your block is recommended to help keep the humidity up. If you don't have a spray bottle, place a container of water inside of the tent (not as effective, but better than nothing). Non-chlorinated water is ideal but not required (chlorine can mostly be removed from tap water by letting it sit for 24 hours, or boiling it then letting cool).
- c. If you can keep the humidity up, your oyster mushrooms should start emerging from the "X" within a few days to a few weeks. Once they start growing, avoid spraying the mushrooms directly. Remember, it is important to spray the tent walls daily and ensure the mushrooms get an adequate amount of fresh air. Oyster mushrooms will take all the air they can get, and you can tell what they are lacking by how they grow in the environment you have provided. For example: if you are getting long stems with small caps, this indicates the mushroom is searching for fresh air. Increase air exchange, while maintaining humidity as much as possible. This can be done by removing the tent occasionally for short periods at a time, propping up the tent, or putting a small fan in the distance to circulate air. If your mushrooms start looking like they are "wilting", this is an indication that the air exchange is too much for the humidity level (dry), and you are not misting the walls of the tent enough. Growing mushrooms is a fine balance of maintaining relative humidity, while providing enough oxygen for the mushrooms to flourish. Remember, mushrooms are like us; inhaling oxygen, and exhaling CO₂.
- d. If mushrooms start growing beyond the tents capability, remove it and continue misting the surrounding area and gently on the mushrooms themselves (do this routinely if able) or harvest them.

4. Harvest

- a. Once your mushrooms start pinning (starting formation of the mushroom fruiting body), they should be ready for harvest within a week. Oyster mushrooms are considered at their prime right before the cap starts turning upwards. The cap should be extended, and the outer edges turned slightly down (this is mostly due to the fact that once the cap edge starts turning upwards, the mushroom starts releasing heavy spores. Harvest is strongly recommended before this point).

- b. Harvest by grabbing the base of the mushrooms, and give it a twisting motion while gently pulling away from the block. You can also cut the base with a knife. Enjoy cooked with your dinner, or store in a paper bag in the fridge. These mushrooms should last about a week, but the sooner you use them the better they will be. **Always cook your mushrooms.** Dehydration is also a great option for long term storage.

5. Second Flush

- a. After your first harvest, continue to maintain humidity for your fruiting block. Over the course of a week or two, a second set of pins should grow through the “X” you initially provided. Some prefer to tape up the initial “X”, and put another opening on the opposite side of the bag. These are both acceptable methods.
- b. If you notice your kit is very light, and no mushrooms have emerged after a few weeks, you may need to soak the mushroom block. Do this by submerging it (in the bag) in non-chlorinated (if possible) water. Weigh it down as best as you can. After a few hours or overnight, remove and drain all excess water. Water pooling in the bag can cause contamination, so poking holes to remove is also acceptable.
- c. Place back under the humidity tent (or whatever you have decided to use) and refer to Section 3.

The mycelium in the block will consume all the available resources before it stops fruiting. It is common to have two flushes of mushrooms, and is possible to have even more. The more flushes you achieve, the smaller the mushrooms will be each time (typically).

Once your bag has stopped producing, it is time to recycle the bag and compost the block. Spent blocks make an excellent addition to your garden soil, so don't be afraid to break it up and mix it in.

We hope you have enjoyed your mushroom growing experience. If you had fun and want to try it again, we invite you to grow our other available gourmet species, like Lions Mane; or watch for the other oyster species (as they come in an array of colors).

Questions?

If you can't find what you're looking for on our FAQ section of the website, please feel free to email us with concerns, so we may address them. We also love to see what you have grown from our kits, so please feel free to share!

Good luck growing!

Thank God It's Fungi

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