



# Shiitake

## Kit Instructions

*Lentinula Edodes*



Growing mushrooms is fun, easy, and a delicious source of healthy nutrients! Shiitake have a savory “umami” flavor and a meaty texture. Directions for growing, harvesting, cooking and preserving are below. If you have questions or concerns please contact us. *All ingredients are natural and organic. The kit contains following ingredients: hardwood sawdust, nitrogen supplement, grain spawn and mushroom mycelium. The mushrooms are 100% gluten-free.*

## Grow them...

- Once you get the kit home take it out of the bag.
- The mushroom kit should be kept indoors and out of the direct path of a heat source so the kit does not dry out. A corner in your kitchen, living room, bathroom, laundry room... usually works well.

**Four environmental factors your mushroom kit will need maintained to thrive are humidity, light, temperature, oxygen.**

### Humidity

The ideal humidity range to grow mushrooms is 75% - 95%. An easy way to keep the kit in its ideal humidity range is to fill the bottom of a plastic tote with a few inches of perlite and add water  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up the perlite. *Perlite is a natural volcanic mineral that will retain water which will slowly evaporate over time, creating humidity.* Place the kit on top of the perlite. A lid can be placed  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the way on the tote, but not more than that or the kit will not receive enough oxygen. Mist the kit and the inside of the tote 2 times a day. Also make sure to add water to the perlite as needed to keep it moist.

\*A hygrometer can be used to measure the humidity. If you use one make sure it measures up to 95% humidity. Hygrometers used in humidors can accurately measure high humidity levels.

\*A humidifier or fogger can also be used but you must make sure to monitor the amount of humidity closely because too much moisture can cause bacterial infections and mushroom rot.



Mushroom kit on top of perlite inside a tote



2 types of spray bottles, both work great!

### Light

Shiitake need at least 8 hours of light daily, either artificial or natural light. This can usually be accomplished by having the kit anywhere in your home



Battery operated Hygrometer



Hygrometer that regulates power to a humidifier

where it is not in total darkness. There is no need to set up special lighting for your kit. *Some fungi contain photoreceptors that are primarily active during the fruiting body stage.*

### Temperature

Shiitake prefer temperatures between 55°F and 75°F.

### Oxygen

Shiitake mushrooms also need oxygen; they absorb oxygen and emit CO<sub>2</sub>. Make sure the kit is not placed in an area with limited oxygen like sealed in a tote or it will not be able to grow.



Small indoor greenhouse being used as a fruiting chamber instead of a tote

## Harvest them...

- The time it takes for the mushrooms to start growing and the time it takes between crops depends on the growing conditions – mainly temperature. You will have at least 2 crops of mushrooms generally 7–28 days apart. The first crop should start growing within 2 weeks.
- The mushrooms are ready to harvest when their edges flatten out and the gills start to show underneath the mushrooms. Harvest the mushrooms by cutting off the stems as close to the block as possible. Scissors work best for this.
- Store fresh mushrooms in a paper bag in your refrigerator. Fresh shiitake mushrooms will usually keep up to 5 days.



Shiitake not ready to harvest, their edges are still curled under



Ready to harvest, edges have flattened out

## ...And then keep on using the kit

- After you harvest your first crop of mushrooms you can grow a second crop by placing the block in a warm, dry room for 1 week. (During the summer you can place the block outside in the sun and either bring the block in at night or cover the block so it does not absorb moisture during the night). This will allow the block to dry out and the block will be notably lighter in weight.
- After 1 week submerge the block under water for 24 hours. A 5-gallon bucket with a weight on top of the kit to keep the block submerged works great.

- After soaking the block follow the instructions for growing your crop. The second crop of mushrooms should begin growing within a few weeks. You can dry and dunk the block several times for more crops. You can also put the block outside during rainy seasons and it will fruit naturally.
- When the Shiitake block is done growing indoors we like to add the blocks to our garden which helps break up clay soil and adds nitrogen, as a mulch around our fruit trees and as a top dressing in our potted plants to help with moisture retention.

## Enjoy them...

Shiitake mushrooms have a smoky, rich flavor which will enhance the flavor of most dishes. They are one of the best choices for mushroom soup stock, Asian meals, stews and stir-fries. They have high levels of vitamins B2, B12 and D.

If you would like to preserve the mushrooms, they can be dried by slicing into thin strips and air-drying on a screen in front of a fan or heat source or in a dehydrator. Dried mushrooms should be sealed in an airtight container and be kept in the dark. Mushrooms can also be preserved by sautéing them and sealing them in an airtight container and freezing.

THE  
Mushroomery  
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