

SHIITAKE Mushroom Kit www.growmushroomscanada.ca

Your kit contains the mycelium of the Shiitake mushroom (*Lentinula edodes*) growing in a bag of pure hardwood sawdust and organic wheat bran. With a little care it will produce two or more flushes of delicious mushrooms.

Select a Location and Prepare the Kit:

Check the date on the label and wait until 40 days (or longer) have passed before starting your kit. Typically if you wait until 60 days have passed, you will get a larger first crop. However shiitake are stimulated to fruit when exposed to cold and physical shock. So the act of shipping may cause your kit to start to fruit in the bag. If you notice soft and fleshy bumps forming, go ahead and start it right away.

As shiitake mushroom kits mature inside the bag, the surface begins to “popcorn” with white crusty raised bumps. The entire surface then slowly turns brown all over. You may also notice a small amount of reddish-brown liquid. That is normal.

When you are ready, place your kit in the refrigerator overnight. The next day, cut open the top of bag, place in sink and fill with cold water. Let sit for 10 minutes, then completely remove the bag and let extra water drip off. This will ensure the surface is well hydrated. Recycle the bag and place the kit on a plate or cookie tray to catch any dripping water.

Choose an area in your house where you will pass by daily to monitor your kit’s progress, and where the temperature ranges from around 16c-20C. **Avoid direct sunlight** but indirect light is necessary for mushrooms to form (enough light to read by).

Keep it Humid:

Mushrooms need very high humidity to form. To increase humidity, roll up the bottom of the humidity tent and place over the kit. (See our website for a [demonstration](#) of preparing humidity tent for use.) If you did not purchase a tent, you can use a clear plastic bag with a dozen dime-size holes. Make sure to arrange the tent to allow space for mushrooms to form.

Mist the inside of the tent, and directly on the surface of your shiitake block, 2-4 times daily with *non-chlorinated water, (or more often if needed) to maintain condensation on the inside of the humidity tent. If you don’t have a spray bottle, place a container of water inside the tent and daily give the kit a short soak in cold water until mushrooms start to form. **Note: Chlorine can be removed from tap water by letting it sit in an open pot for 24 hours or boiling 10 minutes and letting cool.*

Baby shiitake mushrooms start out as soft white bumps the size of finger tips with a brown top. Once the mushrooms have developed a clear cap and stem and start to touch the tent wall, remove the tent and continue to mist three or more times daily. To compensate for the loss of humidity, it can help to raise the kit above a wet tea towel or water dish.

Pro tip: *If it’s a wet rainy week in the spring or fall, your Shiitake kit will be happy to fruit outdoors by the forces of nature – no tent, nor misting required!*

When to Harvest:

Shiitake are at their prime for eating when the veil has broken away and exposed the gills, and the cap has broadened but the outer edge is still slightly curled under. Harvest by twisting off the mushroom, or cutting at the base with a knife. Keep in a paper bag in the refrigerator and eat them up within a week. Always cook your shiitake before eating. ***Some people get a severe rash from consuming raw shiitake.*** For long term storage dehydrate and store in an airtight container. You can also blanch or sauté and freeze them for later use.

The Second Flush:

After your first harvest, let the block rest for a couple of weeks uncovered. To initiate another flush, submerge in a sink or container full of cold water for 4h (weighted down with a heavy plate). Drain off water, replace the humidity tent, and continue to mist a few times daily until you see the next flush of mushrooms.

After two flushes of shiitake, it's time to compost the kit. The mushroom block makes a superb soil amendment for your garden!

Why Stop Here?!

Shiitake are a fantastic mushroom to grow for their culinary and medicinal properties. Once you have a taste for growing mushrooms, you might also want to try growing other gourmet varieties like [Yellow Oyster](#) or [King Oyster](#).

Questions?

Your success is our success and we are happy to help!

Our website has many resources to help you grow mushrooms. Visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for answers to common questions, and our [Learn to Grow](#) library for videos and mushroom growing resources.

For keen mushroom growing enthusiasts, we highly recommend Paul Stamets' book [Mycelium Running](#), and [Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms](#) is a “must have” for market gardeners and commercial growers.

If you have questions, please email us at info@growmushroomscanada.ca