

# Three Easy Mushroom Varieties To Grow at Home

It is important to gain control over what goes into your mouth. Understanding where your food comes from is great for your body and the health of the environment, but starting another container tomato plant or a itty-bitty herb garden in your kitchen window can start to get old after a while. If you're sick of sprouting greens and eager to try your green thumb at something new, the wonderful world of mushrooms might be calling your name.

Cast off your concerns that all homegrown mushrooms are poisonous. That's something mothers tell young children to prevent them from chomping on a death cap in the backyard. In truth, there are dozens of mushroom varieties that you can grow right at home, all without putting your health at risk. Best of all, homegrown mushrooms are incredibly tasty and versatile. Rich in flavor and easy to toss into any recipe, homegrown mushrooms infuse an earthy taste into every dish you add them to, all for far less cost than buying them at the store.

## What is a Mushroom, Anyways?

Not a plant or a vegetable, mushrooms are in their own fungal family. Often called saprophytes or organisms that extract nutrients from decomposing plants and animals, mushrooms get their nutrients by breaking down tree stumps, leaves and other material on the forest floor. Scientists estimate that there are over 140,000 species of mushrooms in the world today, though less than 10% have been fully studied at this time. However, the ones that have withstood scientific scrutiny are nothing less than impressive. Ranging in color, texture, shape and toxicity, mushrooms open an entire world of culinary

adventures, though only a small number of edible mushrooms actually make it to the supermarket shelves.

## **Benefits Of Eating Mushrooms**

No other food can quite compare to the health benefits of mushrooms. Not only can regular consumption help reduce your risk of developing breast cancer and diabetes, but mushrooms also naturally lower bad cholesterol levels and fill you up with protein, vitamins, antioxidants and more. Mushrooms are full of valuable substances like riboflavin, pantothenic acid, folate, thiamine, and niacin. As they are the only naturally vegan dietary source of vitamin D, mushrooms can naturally help inhibit the growth of cancer cells. One cup of stir fried shiitake mushrooms provides 3 grams of fiber, which helps you feel full for longer after your meal. Because most varieties are almost 90% water, mushrooms are extremely low in calories but still make for a top rate meat substitute that will leave you feeling satisfied.

## **Top Reasons to Grow Your Own Mushrooms**

Your mushroom experiences have been stunted if you haven't branched out beyond boring portabello mushrooms. Despite what you might think, growing your own mushrooms doesn't require acres of farmland or specialized knowledge. All you need to get started is a little knowledge, the right spores, and motivation. The techniques for mushroom cultivation tend to be very basic, meaning that a little experience will take you a long way towards becoming self-sufficient and sustainable with your fungi consumption.

# Top Three Types to Grow Yourself

Risotto fans, rejoice! Growing your own mushrooms is a simple way to enjoy the benefits of these fascinating fungi, and there are dozens of delicious mushroom varieties that are simple for the beginner to grow. Once you start growing one of these three mushroom varieties, you will soon start branching out into ever fancier varieties to grow. But be warned; mushroom cultivation is addictive, and once you start, it's too hard to stop.

## Pearl Oyster Mushrooms

You don't need lots of yard space to grow these guys. With the smallest amount of effort, homegrown pearl oyster mushrooms can be yours to enjoy. All it takes is a plastic container full of something you throw away every day without thinking: coffee grounds.

To make these mushrooms work, you'll need to collect more than two gallons of coffee grounds. If your caffeine consumption can't quite handle that rate, simply visit your local coffee shop and see what kinds of grounds they have to spare. You'll be sure to come home with more than you need.

Once you have enough grounds to get started, add them to a two-gallon bucket and blend pre-bought mushroom spores into the top inch of coffee grounds. Use a spray bottle to keep the spore-soaked grounds moist, and cover the bucket with plastic wrap. Punch six or more holes into the plastic wrap. For an even better effect, you can also drill holes in the bucket just a few inches above the top of the grounds so that CO<sub>2</sub> from growing mushrooms can escape with ease. Put the bucket in a warm, dark place and spray it down twice a day to keep it moist. In a matter of weeks, small mushrooms will start to appear that can be easily harvested and eaten. Once your bucket seems to slow down its production, you can swap out

those grounds and get started with fresh ones.

## **Lion's Mane Mushrooms**

If you want to grow something that truly stands out, lion's mane mushrooms might be the variety for you. These softball-sized clusters of white fungi grow with long, white spines down the sides that look like the long hairs made famous on the King of the Savannah. Not only do lion's mane mushrooms taste amazing when sauteed with other vegetables, they also have been shown to have plenty of neurotropic capabilities and are excellent brain boosters, especially for people suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia. grow bag All you need to get started is a grow bag. Mushroom grow bags come with roughly 5lbs of sterilized spawn that have been inoculated into a substrate. When kept in ideal growing conditions, most bags can produce

A grow bag is all you need to get started. Mushroom grow bags come with roughly 5lbs of sterilized spawn that have been inoculated into a substrate. When kept in ideal growing conditions, most bags can produce more than a pound of stunning lion's mane mushrooms.

Keep your bag unopened until you're ready to fruit it (refrigerators work best). Once you start to see white mycelium starting to form throughout the bag it is ready to fruit. At this time, set the bag on a dinner plate or shallow container and keep it somewhere where it will get light and consistent humidity. Make a small slit in a place where the white fungus is extra thick, being careful not to cut into the block. Next, roll down the top of the bag so that it's tight against the block and pull a piece of fabric over the bag to keep it in the dark. Keep the fabric wet by misting it with a spray bottle a few times a day, checking it repeatedly to see if the mushrooms have grown (this usually takes a few weeks).

Once you start to see a large mushroom growing out of the slit, you can harvest it by twisting and pulling it out of the block. Don't use a knife, as it might contaminate the block. It's easy to enjoy your giant mushroom in your favorite dish. If you keep the block moist for several more weeks, you should get additional mushrooms to form through the same hole.

## **Shiitake Mushrooms**

Popular in Asian cooking, shiitake mushrooms are full of flavor and have a highly distinctive, almost meat-like texture. They are delicious when sauteed or baked, and tend to be big successes at farmers markets or natural food stores because they are simple to dry out and can be re-hydrated in a matter of minutes to restore the full flavor. Though shiitake mushrooms are well suited for a small mushroom business, they are also an ideal mushroom for first-time growers to start with if they want to learn how mushroom logs work.

Like many mushroom types, shiitakes need to be grown on hardwood logs that stay moist, well shaded, and out of the way of fierce winds. While oak wood tends to work best, any hardwood can work in a pinch. The best time to cut down mushroom logs is in the late winter in order to allow them plenty of time to set before getting inoculated in the early spring. Logs that are between 3-8 inches are ideal, and each log shouldn't be longer than 3-4 feet. Make sure to choose logs with intact bark, as gaps provide perfect openings for wild spores to get inside and compromise your mushrooms.

In order to inoculate your logs, a high-speed drill is necessary to drill holes that are one inch deep, 5/16 inches in diameter, and spaced six inches apart. After drilling, you can fill each whole with a mix of sawdust and shiitake spores, and then seal the mixture in place by covering the top with melted cheese wax.

Once the logs are inoculated, they need between six months to a year for the spores to fully spread throughout the log in a thread-like network called the spawn run. Throughout these months, the mushroom logs need to be stacked in piles that allow for good air flow while still being protected from wind and rain. The best strategy is to shoot for 35-45 percent moisture content at all times and keep the logs off the bare ground in order to prevent contamination from strains of wild fungi.

After the spawn run is complete, the shiitake mushrooms will start to pop up from the log every few days. Once the caps are just about completely open they are ready to be harvested. It's easy for mushrooms to go from almost ready to overripe in a matter of hours, so make sure to check your logs often to ensure they are being harvested enough. Once harvested, shiitakes can be stored for many months so long as you keep them in well-ventilated containers or dry them out before storage. After the harvest of most of the logs fruiting bodies, it's best to let it rest for the next few months in order to give the mycelium in the logs time to regain their energy in order to bloom again. When taken care of in this way, most shiitake mushroom logs can fruit for 2-8 years with no problems.

## **In Summary**

The wild and wonderful world of mushroom cultivation is not to be underestimated. If your only experience with mushrooms has been the boring button varieties at grocery stores, the time has come to branch out. Start out with one of these three simple strategies for cultivating your own mushrooms, and you'll soon be a fungi fanatic who can't leave them alone.

### **Related products:**

- [Mushrooms \(Nutritional\)](#)

## **Related Reading:**

- *Medicinal Mushrooms*
- *The Unique Mushroom that Balances Hormones*
- *Mushrooms Boost Your Immunity*
- *Shiitake Mushrooms Can Help Prevent Cervical Cancer, Study Finds*
- *How To Kill Candida, Fungi, Yeast in the Body*
- *10 Most Profitable Vegetables To Grow*

## **Sources:**

- *Health Benefits of Mushrooms – Organic Facts*
- *Vitamin D Health Benefits – Mercola*
- *How to Grow Pearl Oyster Mushrooms – Everything Mushrooms*
- *How To Grow Lion's Mane in a Grow Bag – Sow True Seeds*
- *Getting Started With Shiitake Mushrooms – Living Echo*