

HOW TO GROW MUSHROOMS EASY OUTDOORS

The preparation of a mushroom patch that provides many annual harvests requires five easy steps and minimum care once set up. Just water the patch when it gets too dry and watch the mushrooms grow!

This package contains
live mushroom mycelium

Also needed (get these yourself):

- a bag of ten liters beech woodchips animal bedding (6mm size, from the pet store)
- one plain cardboard box (max. 15cm deep) from the supermarket
- patience (until next autumn)

STEP 1 - SUBSTRATE PREPARATION

Fill a 1 liter tupperware type plastic box with lid with dry beech woodchips (available at pet stores) and boiling water. Keep the chips submerged. Wait until the water has cooled down. Drain the water.

STEP 2 - PLANT MYCELIUM IN SUBSTRATE

Wash your hands. Breakup the mycelium (in the small bag) by squeezing the bag. Add the contents to the moist woodchips. Use a fork to mix the spawn evenly. Cover the woodchips with a piece of wet cardboard and close the box with a lid. Do not close it too tightly (the mycelium needs to breathe!). Place the box in a dustfree area (cupboard) at roomtemperature for about two-three months until all the contents appears white. Now you have one liter colonized, outdoors-ready substrate.

STEP 3 - CARDBOARD MUSHROOM PATCHES

Buy a ten liter bag of beech woodchips (6mm size) at a pet store. Put the woodchips in a bucket. Add as much as possible boiling water. Drain the water when it has cooled. Get a plain cardboard box (30x30x15 cm deep) from the supermarket. Fill the box with the liter of colonized substrate and the moist wood chips. Mix thoroughly. For total perfection, add a toplayer of one centimeter of moist soil with a handfull of grass seeds. Bury each box under a shrub in the garden.

STEP 4 - WAIT FOR NOVEMBER

Outdoor boxes typically produce 2-3 flushes of mushrooms per season, usually starting in November, continuing until the temperatures drop below zero. The mycelium tends to 'escape' from the box and then produce mushrooms in fairy circles around it. The fruiting season can be extended by putting a small transparent greenhouse over the bed in the fall.

STEP 5 - MAINTENANCE

A (onetime) production of spawn in winter/spring usually results in a first harvest next fall, and a mushroom patch that can be enlarged and multiplied both in area and yield in the following years. This patch can be maintained far beyond human lifetime by simply:

- keeping it moist
- adding fresh woodchips (once a year)
- harvesting and transplanting 'islands' of colonized woodchips (twice a year).

The mushroom-patches can be left on their own most of the time and (in a good location) need attention only at harvesting time. Unfavorable weather may diminish or prevent a year's harvest, but cannot hurt the mass of underground mycelium, so the 'shrooms will just make up for it next season.