

Shiitake Mushroom Log

Lentinula edodes

- If properly cared for, your log should fruit 9-12 months after the inoculation date on the tag. In colder climates it may take longer. Always stand your logs upright when not shocking it.
- Shiitake mushroom logs must best kept outside, in full shade, in an unsheltered location where they can be rained and snowed on. They are a zone 2 hardy perennial.
- Do not damage or remove bark from the logs as this will shorten its life span. If portions of the bark are damaged use a soft wax to cover the area. This will help the logs retain moisture and minimize contamination from other fungi. Cheese or soy wax works well.
- You may notice a white-mold-like growth on the ends of your logs. This is normal. It's called mycelium. It is similar to plants roots. Do your best to not damage or remove it. The mycelium will form a mat, covering the end of the log it should smell like mushrooms.
- During the first few fruiting, the mushrooms may grow near the plugs. Eventually, mushrooms may grow from any part of the log, even the ends! Your first few fruiting may not produce large quantities, subsequent fruiting will produce larger yields.
- At some point you may notice a different type of mushroom growing from the logs. Just remove it and compost it, your logs have another fungus decomposing the log. This is part of the logs natural decomposition process. NEVER consume a mushroom you are not familiar with or cannot identify.
- Watering – If you have a period of 10-14 days or more without rain, either soak them over night by submerging them or allow them to be watered with a sprinkler for at least 8 hours. It is important to let you logs dry slightly between watering, but not to the point of cracking or shedding bark.

Forcing your mushroom log to fruit (shocking the log)

If you choose to force fruit your log, it is important to use water without chlorine or fluoride. Submerge your mushroom log in non-chlorinated, fluoride-free, ice water for 24 to 48 hours.

Your log may float to the top of the water: this is okay. Do not put anything on the log to keep it underwater. By doing so, you may damage the bark. If at any time your bark does become damaged, cover the damaged area with wax to protect your log from other fungi, and help hold in moisture.

After you remove the log from its ice water bath stand it up vertically for better production. You should see mushroom growth in as little as 2-3 days. When you see the young mushrooms starting to emerge, it is important to not allow them to get wet or damaged as this will produce poor quality mushrooms.

It may take multiple ice water baths to initiate your first fruiting after the 9-12 month incubation period. If you do not see any mushrooms starting to form after 14 days give your log a 24 hours ice water bath. Check your log every few hours to make sure mushrooms are not starting to form under water. If you see them forming, immediately remove the log and stand it on end so mushroom growth is uninhibited. If you are fruiting multiple logs at the same time, make sure there is at least 6" between them to allow air flow and room for the mushrooms to grow freely.

For extra-large flushes, hit the cut end of the log fairly hard with a hammer after removing it from the ice water bath. Take extra care not to hit the bark. This will stress the mycelium and produce larger yield. It will however shorten the life of your log.

Your log needs a 6-8 week recovery time between fruiting. We recommend only shocking your log every 8 weeks for larger fruitings.

When to harvest

You can harvest your mushrooms after just a few days of growth when they are not fully mature. After 7-10 days of growth they should be fully mature. Keep in mind not all of the mushrooms will be fully mature on the same day. For the best edible-quality mushroom, wait until just before the cap completely opens. This is when you can see the gills on the underside, but the lip of the cap (the outer rim) is still in a downward position.

As the lip of the cap continues to open, it will flatten out and begin to curl upward releasing spores. If your mushrooms mature to this stage you may notice a white powder (spores) on your logs. Mushrooms at this stage are still edible, but should be harvested immediately for best flavor.

Using a sharp knife, cutting away from yourself, cut the mushroom at the base of the stem closest to the log. Take care not to cut into the bark. Never pull or break the mushroom from the logs as this may damage the bark.

Storing your mushrooms

Freshly harvested mushrooms will last about a week in your refrigerator. It is best to keep them in a folded-over paper bag. Avoid plastic containers. If you must use plastic a vented container is best.

Taking a Break

If you live in an area that doesn't experience periods with weeks or months below freezing and want to give your logs a break, or you are unable to care for you logs for an extended period of time. Simply wrap the DRY mushroom logs in plastic wrap and put it in the freezer for up to 3 months! When you're ready to continue mushroom production, pull the mushroom logs out of the freezer. Allow the log to warm for several weeks, and then shock it for 48 hours. 7-10 days later you should have fresh mushrooms.

Alternately, if you have been growing them naturally outside and would like fresh mushrooms in the winter, just pull you logs inside, allow it to warm up for a few weeks, and shock them! Make sure to let the log recover for a week after harvest before returning it to the freezing temperatures outside.