
Oyster Mushroom Kit (*Pleurotus ostreatus*, var *Grey Dove*.)

The Oyster mushroom kit you have received is made up of organic spelt husks/sawdust, organic wheat bran and a small quantity of agricultural gypsum. It is totally chemical and additive free. The block is now probably totally white from the mycelium which has grown through the mix. This mycelium is your mushroom organism and with the proper care and stimuli it will produce the "fruits" or mushrooms. The kit includes a perforated plastic bag and bamboo skewers which will be used to set the kit up for production.

To provide the stimuli necessary for mushroom "fruiting" follow these steps:

1. Leave the kit in its original bag, undisturbed, at room temperature, for 2-3 days to recover from shipping. Cut off the top 3 inches of the bag and fold the bag over the block so that the filter patch is covered and tape it with clear tape to the block. With a sharp knife make several X incisions in the bag that the kit is in, approximately 2/3 of the way up the sides. The X cuts should be roughly 2.5cm to 4cm/1 to 2" across - large enough to allow mushrooms to emerge.
2. This kit must be kept in a warm, humid environment: optimum temperature range is 15-21°C (55-70°F) and optimum humidity is 65-85%. This can be achieved by using the perforated bag and the skewers. Insert the skewers into the block in an arrangement that holds the perforated bag in a tent-like position over the block. The skewers should be inserted about 1-2 inches into the block, two on the top and the other 4 around the top perimeter at a slight angle out. Arrange the skewers so that the bag does not touch the kit but forms a 'tent' over the kit. To keep the humidity high you should mist inside the 'tent' with water **at least** a couple of times per day. Place the kit on a tray or pie plate large enough to protect the surface of the table or floor because water will condense on the inside of the bag and drip down. The kit needs to "breathe" and the perforations in the bag will allow an exchange of gases; you can open the tent periodically to allow oxygen in and carbon dioxide out. The mushrooms require some light but not direct sunlight.
3. Small "bumps" will start to form on the kit at the site of the cuts and mushrooms will emerge through the X cuts in the bag. Once the mushrooms start to form they grow quickly; do not mist directly onto the mushrooms - direct the mist around the inside of the bag rather than directly onto the mushrooms. This will facilitate a high humidity environment while avoiding wet/soaked mushrooms. You can also put a clean sponge soaked with water inside the tent to maintain humidity. Check the kit frequently and harvest mushrooms when clumps are fully formed. Cut clumps off carefully to allow any smaller heads or individual mushrooms to continue forming from this site.
4. After the first 'flush' the kit can be 'forced' again. For a second flush of mushrooms, cut 4 new holes in the plastic bag that the kit came in – about 1/3 of the way up from the bottom. Keep the kit in a humid and warm environment and harvest the clumps of mushrooms as they emerge as per step 3. When no more mushrooms emerge after about 1 week you can try to force more mushrooms to grow: strip off the plastic bag and soak the kit in cold water for 1 hour (if using chlorinated water let it stand for a few hours to dissipate the chlorine); place the kit in a bucket of water with a weight on top to hold it underwater as the kit tends to float. After soaking replace the kit in its "tent" but flip it over and start the misting procedure over again.
6. To initiate successive "flushes" you can repeat this procedure: allow the kit to rest for a few days and then re-soak it and start over as per step 4. You can repeat the above procedure until all the nutrients have been used up and no more mushrooms form. At this point the kit will shrink and harden and you will see that it is depleted.
7. After the kit is depleted and no more mushrooms emerge you can break it up and use as compost. It makes an excellent soil conditioner.

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Front view

Side view

