



SHIITAKE MUSHROOM DIY BLOCK GUIDE

Tools: Blade or scissors. Hose (sink hose, outdoor hose, or shower). Plate or waterproof mat

Triggering "Fruiting" of Mushrooms. As of now, your shiitake blocks have been partially "triggered" to fruit via the shock of spanking and massaging and introduction of cold.

Baby Mushroom Formation: Bring the bag inside to a warmer area (60-70F) with light- natural light from a window and artificial light are both fine. If you want to get technical, artificial light should match the sun's spectrum, so 5500-6500K but it doesn't matter a whole lot at this point. After a few days, you'll start to see the bumps on the surface of the block form into tiny round mushroom pins with tiny brown caps. After the first sign of baby mushrooms, let them go in the bag for another day or two until most of the mushroom pins have caps the size of the tip of your pinky or a little bigger. The warmer the block is, the more quickly it will mature. Err on the side of opening up early.

Birthing: When your baby mushroom caps have reached dime size,, it's time to hatch them from their bag. Carefully cut and remove the bag, breaking off as few baby mushrooms as possible. The best way to do this is to cut just below a bottom corner, then slice diagonally upward through the seal and the top of the bag. Toss the bag. Now your shiitake block needs to be rinsed and hydrated, so use the "hose" setting on your sink or use a shower on the strongest setting, and give the whole block a good strong rinse. The coffee-colored metabolites will wash off, and the somewhat water-repellent brown areas on the shiitake block will go from a tacky lighter brown to a dark brown. If you still see tacky-brown, you need to hose more. Now, place your shiitake block (on a plate or waterproof mat) in as humid a place in your home with ideally natural light.

Maturation: The key to getting the best yield possible (3lb from a 10lb bag is totally doable) , is to maintain high humidity. You want to maintain as high humidity as possible while still allowing ample fresh air to keep the block happy. There are a number of ways to do this. They don't need much fresh air, so some folks use bags as "humidity tents" and mist inside the bags regularly. But bags can easily choke out mushrooms if it gets too close to them, or if the air isn't changed out enough- they're kind of a pain. Therefore, I recommend a bathroom with a shower and a window. If you have house plants- move them in and tuck them around your mushroom block. Run the shower warm in the morning and at night (not hitting the block directly). Keep your wet towels in there. You get the idea... Another great tool is a spray bottle. While mushrooms are young and the caps are still very round and dark, they can handle a little bit of direct misting, but try your best just to mist the brown areas and not the mushrooms. Continue this until mushrooms are ready

Picking: Pick them when they look like your typical grocery-store mushrooms or a bit beyond. I find shiitakes to be at their peak flavor right when they begin to drop spores, which coincides with the mushroom being an inverted-saucer shape. At this stage, the shelf-life (in the fridge) is 5-7 days. If you pick them earlier, they should last 10-12 days.

Storing: keep mushrooms in paper (box or bag) in the fridge. generally a regular shelf, and not vegetable crisper is the best. Keep in mind they'll dry out the longer they sit, so try and use them soon!

COOK your mushrooms. Eating mushrooms raw is usually a bad idea. They taste better cooked, and cooking releases the nutrients. ENJOY!

It is possible to get another harvest of shiitake indoors, but it will be smaller and you'll be battling mold. We recommend putting your kit in a shady, moist spot outdoors, in contact with the ground. Expect more "fruitings" in spring and fall.