

# Kaninchen Farm's Oyster Mushroom Bag

Your mushroom bag is inoculated with one of several kinds of oyster mushroom spawn (check the tag to find out what kind). Your bag will have 3 things in it: a substrate (egg cartons, straw, etc), spawn, and air holes. As the spawn makes contact with the substrate, you will see a “fuzz” come off the spawn and spread on the substrate. This fuzz is called mycelium and it is the future mushrooms.

To start with, it helps if you understand the mushroom cycle. According to Tradd Cotter of *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* (we highly recommend this book), there are 7 basic stages of mushroom cultivation. They are:

1. Media Preparation
2. Inoculation and Filling
3. Spawn Run
4. Complete Colonization
5. Initiation and Pinning
6. Maturation and Harvest
7. Rest

When you get your bag, it is already at stage 3. In stage 3, the mycelium sends out chemicals and senses the substrate and available area. It spreads rapidly to capture all the available space before another organism (mold/fungi/bacteria) does. This is called the spawn run. No mushrooms will be forming at this stage. After the mycelium has fully colonized the substrate, a new phase begins. During this point, the mycelium will rest for a bit and start feeding on the substrate to recharge. When there is enough energy built up and the conditions are right, the energy is used to produce primordia (baby mushrooms). This is stage 5. The primordia will grow out through the air holes (they need oxygen too), and become mushrooms. It is very important to mist the primordia at least once a day, if not more. If the primordia dry out, they will abort and you will lose your mushrooms. In 2 -5 days, your mushrooms will be mature and ready to harvest. After the mushrooms are ready for harvest, simply cut them off with a sharp knife. Mist your bag again, and sit it somewhere dark where it can rest, feed, and recuperate for a few weeks. Bring it back out and start watering it again to get another flush of mushrooms.

## What about light? Where should I sit it?

Place the bag in indirect light. We keep ours on a shelf in the kitchen, and a shelf in the bathroom. When fruiting, light is needed for the color to develop on the mushrooms so leave the lights on or move it to an area of more light if you don't see enough pigment. Be careful though, too much light will bleach the mushrooms white.

## When do I harvest them?

Harvest the mushrooms with a sharp knife when the outer edge of the cap starts to turn up a bit.

## What do I do with my bag after it fruits? Will it fruit again?

Yes! In most cases, the bag will fruit again. You can get 2 or 3 flushes of mushrooms from 1 bag. After the third flush, your bag will probably be spent. At that point you have some awesome options for what to do with it.

1. Make more mushrooms! You can take the substrate out of the bag (clean hands and work surface are essential), break it apart, and put it into new substrate. This allows the mycelium to spread and find more nutrients from a new substrate. Cardboard, egg cartons, and 100% cotton clothing all work for substrate you can easily find around the house.
2. Make some awesome compost! Compost thrives when you add mycelium. You can break up the substrate in the bag and mix it into your compost to increase its biological activity.
3. Feed the worms! Worms LOVE mycelium. It is sweet to them and will attract them far and wide. Their poop gives your compost and garden an extra boost. If you have a worm bin, toss them the substrate pieces, or add it straight to your garden to bring in more natural fertilizer.
4. Feed the chickens! Chickens like mycelium too. They can eat feed with mushroom mycelium in it to possibly get a health boost, or you can add it to their coop bedding to help keep it fresh.