



Ways Mills AgroForest Mushroom Log Care and Maintenance

Congratulations! You have purchased hardwood (beech, maple or ash) logs that were inoculated with either Shiitake or Oyster mushroom mycelia last summer. The trees were chosen for good bark condition, few branches, and in dense stands to promote re-growth for sustainable harvest. The trees were felled in the late winter or early spring, and cut into 4' logs which were then drilled with a regular pattern of holes for inoculation. The white dots and holes in your log are the sites of inoculation (and are likely to be where your first mushrooms sprout). The inoculation plugs may fall out, or even be taken by squirrels, but by the time the logs come to you, the mycelium should have colonized most of the sapwood of the log, and the loss of the inoculation plug is not a concern. Most of our mushroom logs are individually tagged and numbered – contact us if you would like to know the tree species or confirm the type of mushroom. Some logs may fail to “take” and despite proper care, may not produce mushrooms – although we have selected logs to avoid this, if a log fails to produce mushrooms, let us know and we will replace the log or refund your money.

Instructions

- 1) Where to house your logs: The logs need to be kept out of direct sunlight, in a cool and well-ventilated spot. The shade can be natural (trees, shrubs, etc.) or the logs can be under shade cloth, a porch, behind a shed or garage, etc. You do not want mold to grow, so the logs should not be in standing water. Stand the logs on an angle to let water drain from the surface, with the bottom of the log on the ground to allow mycelium growth into the ground for additional nutrients and water.



- 2) Keeping your logs hydrated: It is important to prevent your logs from dehydration. Generally natural rainfall will keep the logs properly hydrated but, in times of low rainfall, the logs should be watered. Water as you would your flowers and lawn but avoid having the bark continuously damp as mold may grow.

- 3) Mushroom production: Your logs will naturally fruit (produce mushrooms) in the spring after the air warms and spring rainfall triggers fruiting and in the fall when the air temperature is dropping and rainfall is high. However, you can “force” fruiting any time from May to November by soaking the logs in cool water for 12-24 hours, or sprinkling for 1-2 days, followed by physical shocking of the logs (traditionally by beating with wooden clubs) by dropping the logs on their end onto a hard surface. Be careful not to damage the bark since it acts to reduce pathogen and competitive fungi invasion into your log. With proper care, your log should produce mushrooms for 4-5 years!



- 4) Mushroom harvesting: the mushrooms will start as small buttons and, if the mycelium is healthy, they will grow to full size in just a few days (2 – 4 days depending on temperature). Watch them carefully. When the shiitake are 2-3” in diameter and their edges are still curled under, or the oyster mushrooms are a mix of 1-2” ruffles with no soft spots, cut the stems as close to the log as you can. The mushrooms should be immediately transferred to a refrigerator for rapid cooling, where they can be stored for up to 10 days if kept in a closed paper bag. Alternatively, they can be dried and stored indefinitely. Check the internet for creative recipes for your fresh mushrooms.

