



WINE CAP (STROPHARIA) MUSHROOM

FUNGUS FACTS

Whether you've heard it called wine cap, garden giant, king stroph, or godzilla mushroom, it's time to get to know *Stropharia rugosoannulata* on a deeper level! Wine caps are known for being **highly adaptable** mushrooms that are not too picky about where they grow, as long as their bed stays **moist** and gets a moderate amount of ambient sunlight. The easiest method is to purchase some Stropharia **spawn inoculant** from a local supplier such as Mycopolitan Mushrooms. You will also need some clean recycled **cardboard**, recently made **wood chips** (avoid aromatic softwood like cedar and pine), and **fresh straw** (both soaked overnight and drained). Clear a **shady area** in your garden, dig a couple inches into the earth, lay down some cardboard, wet it, then layer wood chips, spawn, and straw, with about 3 layers of wood chips (the more wood chips, the more food for the mycelium). As a rule of thumb, one quart of grain or sawdust spawn can colonize a 5'X5' area. Mushrooms will **need a few months** to set in, but you can generally expect your bed to fruit in the **late spring and again in the fall**. Harvest mushrooms by **gently twisting** and pulling them off (or cut them if you prefer) and store them in a paper bag for **up to a week** in the fridge.

PROPAGATION

This particular fungus is **saprophytic**, which means it gets its energy from breaking down lignin and cellulose in dead and decaying organic matter. Therefore, it plays a very important role in producing nutrient-rich **humus, a key building block of healthy soil** for any farm, garden, or forest. Much of the action goes on just under the surface of the soil, typically under a layer of wood chips or bark mulch, where Stropharia weave a **dense and filamentous white web called mycelium**. After months or even years of steady decomposition work, the mycelial network may produce a large, spore-producing body that we know as a **mushroom**. Wine cap mushrooms are called by that name because of the rich **burgundy color of their caps**, which can grow up to a foot across on an eight-inch-long stem (hence the nickname "godzilla") characterized by a **wrinkled ring** towards the upper part. Of course, if taste is what you're after, you'll want to harvest the mushroom before it gets too humongous -- that is, once its gills transition from off white to a **lilac gray** or even a purplish slate color. Although there are **no recorded poisonous lookalikes**, you can make sure you are safely picking genuine 'strophs' by establishing your own mushroom bed!

USES AND NUTRITION

Stropharia's light, mushroomy flavor allows a **great degree of culinary versatility**. Wine caps are **rich in many nutrients** and minerals, and are an awesome source of **protein** for vegetarians and vegans. These mushrooms can simply be fried with a little oil and garlic, made into a sauce, in stir-fry, added into risotto or pasta dishes, atop sandwiches and burgers, in a stew, soup, pickled, in an omelette, on top of mashed potatoes, on pizza -- the list just goes on and on!



CAUTION: Mushrooms can be TOXIC if not properly identified. Do not eat any mushrooms that you do not know. The Philadelphia Orchard Project shares this information for educational purposes ONLY and cannot be held liable or responsible for misuse of this information nor as a result of ingestion.

