

GROWING OYSTER MUSHROOMS ON COFFEE GROUNDS

Mushrooms are the fruiting body of a dense, root-like network of thin white, threadlike fungi cells called **mycelium**. In nature, mycelium spreads through the soil or decayed woody plant matter (i.e. live or fallen trees) to fuel its growth **digesting organic matter**. When the network runs out of food, it produces mushrooms that spread their reproductive **spores** through the air to locate and spread to new growing areas. While most mushrooms grow naturally on straw, wood chips, or other decaying matter and can be cultivated on the same **substrate** (growing material), some species like **Oyster mushrooms** (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) can be grown on other spent materials -- like coffee grounds! -- perfect for those in urban environments making use of recycled materials for home or community scale food production!

HOME-SCALE MUSHROOM CULTIVATION

Oyster mushrooms are one of the easiest mushrooms to cultivate at home because they are among the fastest species to inoculate their growing medium. While most home-grown mushrooms will require being drilled and plugged into fresh-cut hardwood logs or onto **pasteurized** straw or wood chips (a process of sanitizing by heat or steam to prevent micro-organisms from competing with the mycelium, oysters can feed readily on coffee grounds that are pre-pasteurized through the coffee brewing process. **Ready to try your hand at growing your own? Follow the steps below!**

1. In a washed and sanitized food-grade plastic bucket, collect enough brewed coffee grounds to fill the container 2/3rds of the way full. You can usually ask a busy cafe for their spent grounds -- you'll need to use the grounds within 24 hours of collecting them.
2. Use a 1/2 inch drill bit to drill 10 holes around the center of your fruiting bucket. Space the holes 3-6 inches apart depending on the size of the bucket, as well as 3 inches from the top and bottom of the bucket.
3. Mix together 4 parts coffee grounds to 1 part oyster spawn sourced online or locally through a local mushroom company like Mycopolitan mushrooms.
4. Place your bucket in a warm and dark place (64-77 degrees Fahrenheit). During the next three weeks, the mycelium will spread through the spawn and the coffee grounds should be covered in white thread-like fibers. If you see any green patches -- this is a sign of competing mold. If a small patch, sprinkle with salt to kill off the mold; if it's spread throughout, discard.
5. After the three weeks, you should see that the mycelium has turned most of the medium white. Cut a larger hole in the growing container and place the bucket in a location with a little light and more air circulation. Spray the spawn with water 2x a day to keep moist. After 5-7 days, you should see tiny little white mushrooms growing from the cut holes. Cut when full size!

NOTE: Because there are poisonous lookalikes, do not harvest or eat wild oyster mushrooms without guidance from an expert forager.



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