

Log Grown Shiitake Mushrooms

One of the oldest mushrooms in cultivation, the Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*) is a gilled mushroom that has been cultivated in parts of Asia for over 1,000 years.

Logs are normally cut during the Winter and inoculated in Spring by drilling holes and inserting mushroom mycelium, which grows through the log over 6 – 12 months, then produces flushes of mushrooms for 3 – 4 growing seasons. In New York, growers can reliably fruit shiitake outdoors in woodlands or under shade from June – October.



Care for Your Shiitake Log

Now that your logs are inoculated, follow these steps to care for, fruit and enjoy shiitake mushrooms for years to come.

Incubating or “Laying” the logs

- This phase of production is called the ‘spawn run’ – the fungal mycelium takes approximately 6-9 months to colonize the log.
- Place your logs in a shaded, humid area, not having strong sunlight hitting the log at any time. Avoid windy areas as this can dry your log out. Under evergreen trees, like hemlock, is ideal. Agricultural shade cloth can be used to create these conditions.
- If the area or season is dry, with little natural precipitation, consider giving the log an occasional soak (at least 2 hours but never exceeding 48 hours as the mycelium can drown).
- Shiitake mycelium can survive our winters so the logs should be left outdoors.

Fruiting Your Logs

1. Once your log has been colonized and the correct environmental triggers occur (temperature and moisture shifts) you will get your first natural flush of shiitakes. These appear in April-June, one year after the inoculation date. This is a sign that you can begin to manage your logs.
2. Soak your log in cold water for about 24 hours (again, never more than 48 hours). This should result in the appearance of many ‘pins’ within a few days after the soak. These will develop into full blown shiitakes in a few more days. Shiitakes can be picked when the mushroom cap is still slightly curled under.
3. At this point, you can now ‘force’ your log to fruit every 6-7 weeks during the growing season. Lay your logs back in their shaded, protected area in between fruiting. They can continued to be managed this way for 3-4 seasons.

For more information, contact Tracey Testo, CCE Program Coordinator at the Agroforestry Resource Center by phone or email at 518-622-9820 x119, tet35@cornell.edu