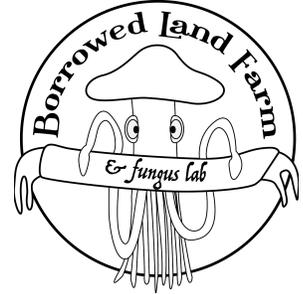


Growing Oyster Mushrooms on Straw



1. Gather materials:
 - a. bucket or bag for inoculated straw
 - b. laundry bag or 5-gallon paint strainer bag
 - c. wheat or oat straw, or other agricultural waste
 - d. a way to shred the straw -- shredder, vacuum mulcher, lawnmower, string trimmer, machete, etc.
 - e. a cooler
 - f. a way to heat water -- a big pot on the stove is good
 - g. thermometer to check water temperature -- meat thermometer is perfect
 - h. mushroom spawn -- grain spawn is good, sawdust spawn is also fine
 - i. sanitizer -- rubbing alcohol, iodine-based, or 10% bleach solution
2. Shred straw: this is not strictly necessary, but definitely helps colonization
3. Pasteurize straw: soak the straw in water that is 160 - 180 degrees F for about two hours. An easy way to do this is to put the straw in a laundry bag inside a cooler and pour 180 degree F water over it until the cooler is full. Close the cooler and leave it for two hours.
4. Allow the straw to cool and dry: Your goal is for the straw to be not hot to touch (under 100 degrees F) and to have no more than 60% moisture content, which corresponds to being able to barely squeeze a drop of water out of a double handful of straw.
 - a. You can spread it on a tarp or let the bag of straw hang for a couple of hours.
 - b. You can also accomplish this quickly by spinning the straw in a washing machine spin cycle. Once the water is out, it will cool quickly.
5. Sanitize your equipment (and wash your hands), then mix straw and spawn together and stuff into bag or bucket and seal top. If you're using a bucket, pre-drill 1/2" holes and line bucket with a trash-can liner. After the bag is sealed, cut x-slits in bag or bucket liner to allow the fungus to breathe, and to provide a spot for fruiting to occur. A good thumb rule is to create two openings per pound of dry straw.
6. Set the bag or bucket somewhere at room temperature and let it colonize for about 2 weeks.
7. By 2-3 weeks or so, mushrooms should start forming at the holes. Put the bucket or bag somewhere where it gets indirect light, like in a room with a window. Keep the developing mushrooms from drying out by using a humidifier, a humidity tent, or spraying several times a day. Within 4-5 days, they ought to be ready to pick. Pick them as the caps are flattening out, but before they turn upwards.
8. Put the bucket or bag back into a spot to rest for 10-14 days, at which point it will fruit again. It should fruit two times or more.
9. When you feel like you've gotten all you're going to get out of it, compost your spent straw. Worms love it!