

# Growing Oyster Mushrooms

## Common and Latin names

White Tree Oyster: *Pleurotus ostreatus*

Golden Oyster: *Pleurotus citrinopileatus*

Pink Oyster: *Pleurotus djamor*

White Oysters are native to North America. Golden and Pink Oysters evolved in the tropics, but are easy to cultivate here. We offer these three species in perforated plastic bags, filled with pasteurized wheat straw, inoculated with grain spawn.

Mushrooms fruit individually or in groups from bumps, which normally form and begin pushing against the insides of bags within 3 weeks of makeup date. Holding them at temperatures below 65 degrees delays the process. A warmer environment is especially important for Golden Oyster development.

Taking care not to damage bumper use a small knife or pair of scissors to cut or remove plastic covering them. Push a pair of chopsticks or a straightened wire coat hanger into the top of the bag. Place it on a plate or tray near an open window of another location with good light and air circulation. Spray lightly with chlorine-free water and cover with the humidity tent provided. Continue to moisten once or twice daily by lifting the tent or spraying through a hole.

Harvest mushrooms by cutting them off at the base before they flatten and begin casting spores, which will appear as white powder on the inside of the tent. Keep the bag inside your clean tent and move to a secure area. Check every few days until new bumps appear, and repeat the fruiting process.

After the second flush, you will notice that the bag is much lighter. For a third flush, rest the bag for a week, then soak for 20 minutes in chlorine-free water. The straw should now be tightly bound by mushroom mycelium, and you can remove the remnants of the original bag. Set out the block again under your humidity tent. Green mold usually shows up before a fourth soak. When it does, toss your block on the compost pile.

Note that at any point in bag management, before mold appears, you can use the macerated straw to inoculate freshly pasteurized material or entire straw bales that have been soaked or watered for at least 3 days.