

READY TO FRUIT (RTF) BAGS- A NOVEL CONCEPT TO ENHANCE HOUSEHOLD NUTRITION THROUGH OYSTER MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms are vegetables which are storehouse of excellent nutritional and medicinal components to enhance nutrition and health through daily intake. Daily intake of mushrooms, although a very common thing in south east asia and the west, yet has to find place in the daily household menu of Indian families. Among the many reasons, is the lack of awareness of its nutritional and medicinal properties, its non availability in common stores and high cost wherever available. There are about 1500 varieties of mushrooms which are edible of which about 600 varieties are exclusive medicinal. Among the culinary medicinal mushrooms, Oyster mushrooms is the easiest to grow and highly suitable for Indian climate.

Nutritional and medicinal properties of oyster mushroom

Although oyster mushrooms are easiest to grow as compared to other mushroom varieties, however, the process becomes a little cumbersome when small amount of the mushrooms have to be grown for household usage. IIHR has initiated the concept of Ready to fruit bags for oyster mushrooms. This ensures that oyster mushroom can be easily grown at home in some humid corner of the backyard.

1. The concept involves providing the seeded and developed (grown) straw bags to the consumer (Fig 1).
2. A slit or hole is to be made by the consumer, light spray of watering to be done and the mushrooms sprout within 5-7 days (2).
3. Bags containing 1 kg wet straw fully grown with the mushroom mycelium are priced at Rs. 20 each.
4. A maximum of 10 bags are given on prior order basis (25 days advance order).
5. The bags have to be collected from IIHR on any working day on cash payment basis. At present Elm oyster mushrooms are being made available. These bags

can be purchased by the housewives both urban and rural to harvest excellent healthy mushrooms at home.

6. The harvested mushrooms can be used fresh or sun dried which makes them enriched with vitamin D. The dried mushrooms can be used as such by presoaking in warm water for 15-20 minutes or can be easily powdered in house blender (mixie) at home.
7. The powder and the dry mushrooms can be stored even upto one year (refrigerator) in air tight containers. The powder can be used to enhance the nutrition and flavor of any everyday meal like rasam, chutney podi, plain rice etc.
8. Thus an excellent hygienic, chemical free and culinary - medicinal mushroom can be a part of your kitchen or terrace garden. All you require is a bottle sprayer and a few minutes for spraying water.

FOR PLACING ORDER CONTACT:

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PLEASE COME TO RTF BAGS ONLY AFTER CONFIRMATION BY PHONE OR MAIL

RTF BAG INSTRUCTIONS:

- a) Place The Bags In A Well-Lit Area To Grow, But Not In Direct Sun Light. Regular Strong Reading Light Is Sufficient. Constant Light Is Not Necessary. It Is Fine To Leave Your Kit In The Dark Over Night.
- b) Temperatures Of 24 - 27°C Are Best For Oyster Mushrooms. Temperatures Above And Below May Reduce Yield, Change Shape, Colour And Increase Time Of Appearance Of Mushrooms.
- c) Mushrooms Will Sprout Out Of The Holes In 5-8 Days. Water By Spray Misting On The Surface Once A Day. In This Case You Would Be Watering The Plastic Bag With The Holes In It. When The Small Oyster Mushrooms Start Sprouting Increase Watering To 2-3 Times A Day Depending On The Outside Humidity. Do Not Overwater The Mushrooms As Their Keeping Quality Drastically Reduces By Extra Water On Mushrooms. Secret Of Good Quality Mushrooms Is Humidity (80-85%) Rather Than Irrigation. Air Circulation Is Necessary For Normal Mushroom Growth. The Lack Of Fresh Air Will Prevent Mushrooms From Growing And Produce Long Stringy Mushrooms.
- d) Harvesting - Harvest By Twisting Slowly One Complete Turn To Free Them From The Growing Medium. Be Careful Not To Damage The Growing Mediums' Surface. Do Not To Cut The Mushrooms Off, Because This Leaves A Stump To Rot, Which Can Later Inhibit The Fruiting Of The Next Crop. Harvest Mushrooms When Young And The Color Starts Becoming Lighter. Overmature Mushrooms Cannot Be Stored.
- e) Oyster Mushrooms Can Be Sundried With Gills Facing Upwards. Such Mushrooms Are Enriched In Vitamin D. Dried Mushrooms Can Be Powdered In Mixie. The Dry Mushrooms And The Powder Can Be Packed In Airtight Containers And Stored In Refrigerator. The Dry Mushrooms And The Powder Can Be Used To Fortify Any Food Item Used Daily.

- f) Oyster Mushrooms Are One Of The Most Hygienic, Chemical Free Vegetables With Immense Nutritive And Medicinal Properties.
- g) Enjoy growing and eating your own homegrown Oyster mushrooms.



Fig1: Fully grown bag or Ready to fruit bag



Fig 2. Making a slit or hole (12-14 holes)



Fig 3. Spray of water



Fig 4. Early fruiting stage



Fig 5. Mushroom ready for harvest