

# Mushroom Log Care Instructions

## Care of Your Log

Your Shiitake Mushroom Log has been recently inoculated with spores which will take 6 to 12 months to colonise the log. You should look for a shaded, damp area in you garden where there is little or no wind. The log will need rainfall on it, unless you are watering and soaking it regularly. A North-facing wall out of the wind is a good place, as long as it is not out of the rain, alternatively it does well under a tree, shrub or hedge. Lay the log down but Prop it up at one end for air circulation.

Frost and snow are no problem for your log, but watch out that for cats scratching and dog pee which can adversely affect the log! Slugs will also eat the mushrooms and may need to be controlled during fruiting.

The most important thing is to put the log somewhere that it is easy to see... Most failures are due to the log fruiting happily away at the bottom of the garden; out of sight and mind!

You can tell if your log has colonised with mushrooms as the butt will show a brown and white discoloration; the log will now produce intermittent mushrooms naturally or can be forced...

## Soak and Shock

If you want to **“force”** your log to fruit, you can produce a **“flush”** of mushrooms as shown in the picture by soaking and shocking. This is usually successful but not always! A rough timeline of a fruiting cycle is shown below.

“Shock” the log to initiate fruiting by (i) dropping the log on its end from 2 feet high onto concrete or stone and (ii) totally immersing it cold water for up to 36 hours. (Non-chlorinated water i.e. Rainwater or tapwater left to stand for 2 days to let the chlorine evaporate off.) – This gives the log a cold shock which tricks it into fruiting... its is the change in temperature between warm and cold that initiates fruiting. Having the log at room temperature or a sunny afternoon temperature for a day before shocking also helps. If no mushroom appear within a week or so then leave the log to mature for a further 3 months. Logs are more likely to fruit in the spring and autumn when the nights and cold and days are warm.

## Resting the log

After picking the mushrooms put the log back in it shady position and leave it for 4 months to “recuperate”, the soak and shock the log to start the second fruiting flush, or leave it to fruit in its own time. (Please Note) Do not hang up the log – its handle is just for carrying! Remember to keep it moist all the time.

## Picking

Pick the mushrooms when the cap is just starting to open at about 2-4 inches across after a few days of growing. Shiitake have a brown cap and white gills – See Photo for identification. Each log will produce 2-3lbs or more of mushrooms over its lifetime with careful management.

