

FAQ: Growing Mushrooms on Logs

Log Selection & Log Care

What type of log should I use?

Fresh hardwood logs are ideal for growing mushrooms. Suitable species include oak, maple, beech, and alder. Avoid softwoods like pine, cedar, and spruce.

What size logs are best?

Logs should be 3–8 inches in diameter and 3–4 feet long. These dimensions are manageable and provide ample substrate for mushroom colonization.

How fresh should the logs be?

Logs should be cut from healthy, live trees no more than six weeks before inoculation. Avoid logs with visible signs of decay or rot.

When should logs be cut?

Healthy, living trees can be cut for mushroom logs at nearly any time, but the best windows are:

- Late winter to early spring before bud swell
- Fall after one-third of the leaves have changed color.
- For logs harvested early in winter, protect them from drying out by shading or covering until temperatures rise above freezing

During these times, nutrients are concentrated in the wood, and the bark remains tight, protecting logs during the spawn run.

Avoid cutting logs in spring after budding, as nutrients are used for foliage growth, and bark can loosen, increasing contamination risks.

After cutting, allow logs to cure for at least two weeks before inoculation to let antifungal compounds subside..

How often should logs be watered?

Logs should remain moist throughout colonization. During dry periods, water the logs lightly with a hose or sprinkler to maintain humidity without oversaturating them.

How can I force logs to fruit?

After colonization is complete (6–12 months), soak the logs in cold water for 12–24 hours to stimulate fruiting. This mimics the conditions of natural rainfall.

What should I do with logs in freezing temperatures?

Logs can withstand freezing temperatures during colonization. However, ensure they are not waterlogged before freezing to avoid damage.

Inoculation

When should I inoculate the logs?

Inoculate logs within six weeks of cutting to ensure they remain fresh and suitable for colonization.

What tools do I need for inoculation?

You will need:

- A drill with a 5/16-inch bit
- Plug spawn
- Hammer or mallet
- Wax (soy or paraffin)
- A heat source to melt the wax
- Brush or applicator for the wax

What steps should I take to inoculate logs?

1. Drill holes 1 inch deep and 4–6 inches apart in a diamond pattern around the log.
2. Insert plug spawn into each hole and hammer them flush with the log's surface.
3. Seal the holes with melted wax to protect the mycelium and prevent contamination.

What kind of wax can I use?

Soy or paraffin wax is recommended. Both are effective in sealing inoculation sites to retain moisture and protect against contamination.

What type of drill bit is recommended?

Use a 5/16-inch drill bit. You can mark the bit with masking tape at the 1-inch depth for consistent drilling.

Harvesting

How long will it take from inoculation to harvest?

Colonization typically takes 6–12 months, depending on the mushroom species and environmental conditions. Faster-growing species like oysters may be ready in six months, while shiitake can take up to a year.

What kind of yield should I expect?

A well-maintained log can produce mushrooms for several years. The yield will vary depending on the species, log size, and conditions, but can range from ¼ - ½ pound per inoculation site.

How long does it take to get the first flush?

Once colonized, mushrooms will fruit during favorable seasons, typically in spring or fall, when conditions are cool and moist.

How many years can a log produce mushrooms?

Logs can produce mushrooms for 3–7 years, depending on the species and the type of wood used.

What pests can impact my mushrooms?

Common pests include slugs, insects, and rodents. Regularly inspect logs and address pest issues by improving airflow, reapplying wax, or adjusting stacking methods.

Plug Spawn**How long can plug spawn be stored?**

Plug spawn can be stored for up to six months if kept under appropriate conditions.

How do I store plug spawn?

Store plug spawn in a cool, dark place, such as a refrigerator, and keep it sealed to maintain its viability.

Is my spawn moldy?

Healthy mycelium is fluffy and white or slightly cream-colored. Mold is usually green, black, or orange, with a cotton-like or clumped appearance. If you see mold, consider replacing the spawn.

What are these little kernels in my plug spawn?

The kernels are bits of grain included with the plug spawn to support mycelium growth. They are normal and should not affect inoculation.

Let me know if you need any adjustments or additional questions!