

BLUE SKY FUNGI LION'S MANE MUSHROOM BLOCK

Special Note: Do not open your mushroom fruiting block until you have read through **ALL** the instructions and prepared all the necessary materials. The Lion's Mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) mycelium (the fungi that forms the mushroom) is the thin white growth that is growing on the sawdust block. Before you begin, make sure that the mycelium block was not cracked or broken apart within the bag. If the block is cracked (or you received it by mail), place the sealed bag in a dark place and don't move it around. Allow the mycelium to recover and regrow for a few days undisturbed. If it starts growing a thick, white, blob-like mass near the air pocket in the bag, it is ready.

Use non-chlorinated water to keep the mushroom block moist. Well and tap water is good, but if the tap water is chlorinated, you can boil it or leave an open container of water out overnight to breathe out the chlorine.

Placement Indoors: Find a place inside that is of average room temperature, has indirect lighting (enough to read words on a page, but not in direct sunlight), and away from drafty air currents, heat sources, and materials that are porous (spores drop from the mushroom). A more humid place like a basement is better than a really dry place. You will place a humidity tent (a plastic bag with many air holes cut out of it) over and around the block to maintain a high humidity environment. We recommend you place the block on a plate or pan to catch the water that drips off the side of the humidity tent.

Setting up and Initiating Fruiting: Prepare the space you would like your Lion's Mane to grow in. The block will remain in the plastic grow bag during mushroom growth, but will grow out of a small, X-shaped slice in the side or top of the bag. To determine where to make the opening, look for the thickest area of mycelium on the surface of the sawdust, this is the primordia of the Lion's Mane mushroom. You will most likely see the mass on the top near the air filter patch. Sometimes it will have grown large and deformed within the grow bag. It is recommended to remove the deformed growth and start a new mushroom. To do this, cut across the top of the bag near the heat seal with scissors or a razor blade. Reach into the bag with clean hands and pull off the deformed mushroom growth to expose the fresh mycelium on the sawdust below the soft tissue. This will restart the growing cycle and the new mushroom will form from the same area. Then flatly fold the bag over the side of the block to remove as much air space as possible and cut the X-shaped hole over the removal area. If no large mass is forming, or you want to fruit the mushroom out of the side, cut a 2 cm long X-shaped hole in the side or top of the plastic bag. Lion's Mane mushrooms will grow out of the hole toward the fresh air and when maturing, the teeth form down with gravity.

When everything is set up, follow these steps:

- Clean your hands and scissors / razor blade.
- Determine the site where you want the mushroom to grow from and cut the plastic.
- Gently squeeze the excess air out of the bag and fold the top portion over. You can tape down the bag flap to keep it tight against the block, or you can turn the bag on its side to pinch down the plastic flap. You may want to prop up the bag above the counter-top to allow the teeth to cascade down and out of the mushroom.
- Place the humidity tent (plastic bag) over and around the entire mushroom block and the plate and/or support object under the block. You should spray the inside of the bag with a water mist from a spray bottle prior to covering the block with the humidity tent.
- You can place the block outside if the right conditions are present, but you open the mushrooms up to bugs.

Daily Care: Now that your mushroom fruiting block is set up, you need to perform some daily care.

- Maintain a high humidity environment within the humidity tent. There should be visible droplets of water on the inside of the humidity tent and on the grow block plastic. Do this with the spray bottle several times (2 to 3) per day.
- Allow for good airflow. There should be enough holes in the humidity tent to allow fresh air exchange and maintain the humidity for several hours. The humidity tent can also be removed and replaced each time you mist to promote air exchange.
- It is recommended to carefully remove the bag each time you spray the inside of the bag with the spray bottle, then carefully replace the humidity tent to create an open air pocket around the growing mushroom. Try to avoid allowing the plastic humidity tent to touch the growing mushroom. (Remember to use non-chlorinated water)

Growing: Lion's Mane mushrooms should start to grow within 2 weeks after opening the bag and take about 1 to 2 weeks to grow. Continue to water the humidity tent while it has mushrooms growing but try to avoid getting a lot of water onto the mushroom itself. The blob-like primordia will get larger and will eventually form teeth-like structures that will grow like a waterfall or a lion's mane!

Harvesting: The mushroom is ready to harvest a few days after the teeth form. The teeth will quickly grow longer and are dropping spores at that point. The quality of the mushroom will begin to degrade after the teeth are about 2 cm long. You can harvest the mushroom by either cutting it off from the surface of the block, or if it grew out of the X-shaped hole in the side, simply hold and twist off the mushroom. Make sure to remove enough of the mushroom to expose fresh mycelium on the sawdust below. The next mushrooms will grow out of the same location. Younger mushrooms are denser and will have a better shelf-life than an old, long-in-the-tooth mushroom. Always cook your mushrooms prior to eating.

More Mushrooms! Don't get rid of the block. Lion's Mane will produce several flushes of mushrooms, but you will need to maintain the humidity in the tent to promote adequate growing conditions. You can expect at least 3 flushes of mushrooms from these blocks. If no more mushrooms form, or you cannot provide adequate daily care, then you can try to place the block outside to grow in the spring or fall weather. Just make sure to keep it in a humid environment and out of direct sunlight. If to no avail, then the block will make excellent mulch or compost for your garden.

Ideal conditions for Lion's Mane mushrooms:

- Temperature: 50 to 80 °F
- Humidity: 80 to 100 %

Notes on Lion's Mane:

- When cooking, try tearing the mushroom along the teeth of the mushroom instead of cutting with a knife. The Lion's Mane will tear into pieces that maintain the shape of the teeth.
- Numerous polysaccharide and beta-glucan compounds are produced by Lion's Mane mushrooms that have been found by researchers to have anti-tumor effects on the GI tract and liver, and also improve immune function.
- The mycelium of Lion's Mane produces compounds that stimulate Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) which will promote the growth, repair, and maintenance of nerve cells in the body. Lion's Mane compounds can improve cognitive function, motor skills, memory, and nerve damage repair.

Contact Matt or Nicole at blueskyfungi@gmail.com with any questions and include a photo if possible.

Post photos of your success and tag us on Instagram @Blueskyfungi . Thank you and enjoy!