

Oyster mushroom bucket care guide



Incubation

LOCATION

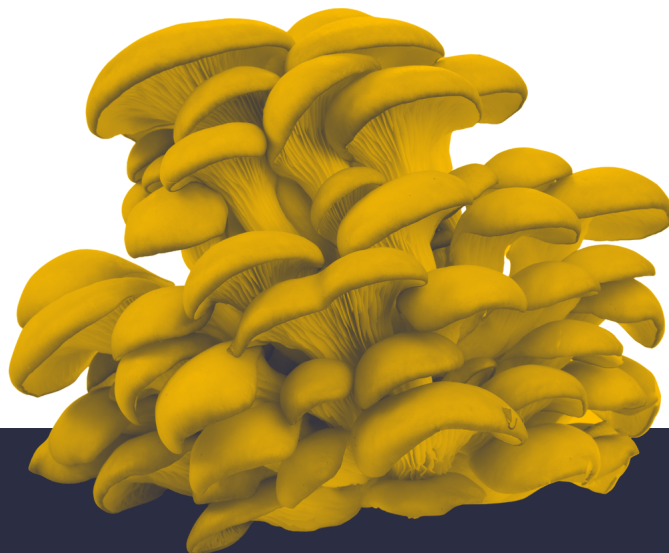
Keep your bucket in a dry place ideally outside of direct sunlight. We'd suggest somewhere like a desk, kitchen or dining room table. Avoid spots where the temperature will fluctuate dramatically like a drafty window sill or next to a radiator.

You want the bucket to be inside as the ambient temperature of your home will be about right for the mycelium.

TIMING

Leave your bucket to do it's thing for at least a week - opening the lid lots to check on it gives competing moulds more chance to catch hold so try and sit tight!

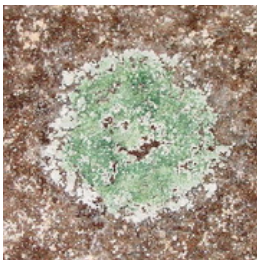
After 1-2 weeks you can open the bucket to check to see how it's doing. If the mycelium has colonised all the substrate, it's time to move to fruiting conditions.



Checking for contamination

After 1-2 weeks, it's time to check on your bucket. Open up the lid and peer inside - if everything is white, fluffy and smells like healthy mycelium you're good to go!

If there's any other colours or smells, it could be mould, but don't panic: if you act quickly there are some moulds your mycelium may be able to beat.



Trichoderma

A quick-growing white mycelium that turns green after producing spores. If there is only a small amount, try scooping out the mould and surrounding straw. Check back after a day to see how the oyster mycelium is doing. If the green is back, unfortunately it's best to throw it out.



Wet rot

A sour-smelling bacterial infection that occurs when substrate is too wet, often at the bottom of the bucket. Drain off as much excess liquid as possible - if there is a large contaminated area you can remove this and give your bucket a wipe down to give the mycelium a better chance.



Cobweb mould

Appearing similar to healthy mycelium, this mould is a light grey rather than bright white, with a distinctively wispy growth pattern. Cobweb mould can be killed using bleach spray (the mycelium can tolerate this!) and likes very humid conditions, so drain off any excess water in your bucket.

Checking for contamination



Pin head mould

You've likely seen this mould on strawberries - it's easily identified by the tiny black heads. If you spot this mould you should throw out the contaminated substrate out as this mould can be dangerous to people with weakened immune systems.



Orange bread mould

The distinctive orange colour makes this mould easy to identify. It begins in a wispy form before growing into a powdery patch. It spreads incredibly quickly and is unfortunately very resilient to any kind of treatment - if spotted, it's best to throw everything away.

Metabolites

If you spot small pools of transparent yellow or orange liquid, don't worry - this is just a waste product of the mycelium's metabolic processing.

The production of metabolites is a natural immune response of the mycelium to stress or pathogens. Often the mycelium can deal with this stress without any interference, so don't worry if you spot metabolites.



Introducing fruiting conditions

MISTING

If the straw has been fully colonised by the mycelium and there is no sign of contamination, start spraying the holes of your bucket roughly twice a day using a plant mister.

FRUITING

After 1-2 weeks of introducing fruiting conditions (i.e. humidity) mushrooms should start to fruit!

HARVESTING

Once the gills of your mushrooms have started to curl over, they're ready for harvest. Twist them off at the base of the bucket or use a sharp, clean knife to remove the cluster.

LOCATION

If you haven't already, make sure your bucket is somewhere it will get a decent amount of air flow - i.e. not hidden in a cupboard or under your bed.



Additional flushes

Oyster mushroom buckets can provide several harvests if you keep the conditions right for fruiting.

MISTING

After your initial harvest, keep misting the bucket about twice a day - you should get at least one more flush from it, spaced roughly a week apart.

SOAKING

If your bucket is looking particularly dry you can soak the mycelium in water for an hour or so to re-hydrate it. Make sure to strain off any excess water to avoid things getting too soggy.

The longer the mycelium runs for, the higher the risk of contamination.

Eventually it'll be time to say goodbye to your bucket - but don't throw the spent substrate in the bin! It's great as a mulch in an outdoor plant pot or just added into your compost as a source of carbon.

If you're not going to use your bucket again please return it to us rather than throw it away to prevent plastic waste - just get in touch to drop it off.