

# Shiitake Mushrooms

*Lentinula edodes* · *Omphalotaceae* family

**DIFFICULTY** Moderate  
**TYPE** Log-grown fungus  
**MATURITY** 6–12 months



**LIGHT**  
Shade



**MOISTURE**  
Logs kept damp;  
soak to fruit



**SUBSTRATE**  
Fresh hardwood  
logs



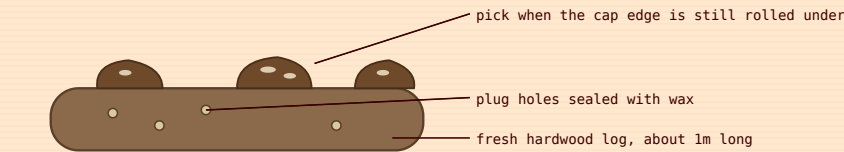
**TEMPERATURE**  
10–25°C, fruits in  
cool spells



**SPAWN**  
Plug spawn, 30–  
50 per log

## 01 Inoculated log

Shiitake grows on fresh hardwood logs, inoculated through drilled holes with plug spawn and sealed with wax. The fungus spreads through the log for months before it fruits.



## 02 Planting

|           |                                                                                                         |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD    | Drill 12mm holes 2.5cm deep, 10cm apart in staggered rows, tap in plug spawn and seal with wax.         |
| SUBSTRATE | Fresh hardwood logs, 10–15cm wide, about 1m long. Avoid pine and cypress.                               |
| TIMING    | Inoculate in late winter to early spring. First flush 6–12 months later, then 1–2 a year for 3–5 years. |
| LOGS      | Use eucalypt, wattle or oak, cut in the cool season and inoculated within 2 weeks.                      |

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

## 03 Growing care

- Keep logs off the ground, in shade and out of drying wind.
- Water in dry spells so logs stay damp, not waterlogged.
- To fruit, soak logs in cold water for 12–24 hours.
- Rest logs 6–8 weeks between soaks.

## 04 Problems

- **Drying out** — dry logs stop fruiting; keep them shaded and water in dry spells.
- **Competing fungi** — wild fungi colonise logs; use fresh logs and seal holes.
- **Termites and slugs** — termites eat logs and slugs graze caps; keep logs off the ground.
- **No fruiting** — logs too young or never soaked; wait 6–12 months, then soak.

## 05 Harvest & storage

|            |                                                                                                    |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SIGNS      | Pick when the cap is tan-brown, about 70–80% open, with the edge still rolled under.               |
| METHOD     | Twist or cut each mushroom at the base with a clean knife.                                         |
| AFTERCARE  | Rest logs 6–8 weeks after harvest, then soak again.                                                |
| STORAGE    | Fresh in a paper bag in the fridge, 1 week. Dried shiitake keep 1 year or more.                    |
| EATING     | Always cook; raw shiitake can cause a skin rash in some people.                                    |
| PRESERVING | See <a href="#">Dehydrating</a> (drying mushrooms for storage) for ways to keep a harvest surplus. |

## 06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Shaded verandah

Tree shade

AVOID NEARBY

Direct sun

Drying wind

ROTATION NOTE

Not applicable — logs fruit for 3–5 years, after which they can be composted.