



Lion's Mane Mushrooms

Supplies

The supplies included in this kit are:

- 1 cup Lion's mane grain spawn
- 5 cups oak sawdust fuel pellets
- 1 mushroom growing bag
- Spray bottle

The supplies you may need to provide are:

- Large cooking pot
- Dechlorinated water
- String, twist tie or a rubber band
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wheat or oat bran (optional)



Instructions

When growing lion's mane mushrooms, the substrate (which is the material they're grown on) needs to be sterilized or pasteurized. This will kill off any microbes, like molds or other fungi, that might be in the substrate, which would make it harder for the mushrooms to grow. There are many ways to prepare substrate for mushrooms. The most common way is to seal the substrate in a bag and heat it in a pressure cooker for at least an hour. This completely sterilizes the substrate, killing all possible microbes, and is necessary for mushrooms that are harder to grow. Since lion's mane mushrooms are easier to grow, we can pasteurize the substrate, which will kill off most but not all microbes, by simply using hot water.

Pasteurizing the substrate

1. For this kit, the sawdust pellets should already be inside the mushroom growing bag. Optional: to get a bigger crop of mushrooms, you can add half a cup of wheat or oat bran to the sawdust pellets now.
2. Heat 6 cups of water in a large pot on the stove until it comes to a rolling boil (many large bubbles appear).
3. Remove the water from the heat. Using oven mitts to protect your hands, CAREFULLY pour the hot water into the growing bag. You may find it easier to use a mug or measuring cup to scoop up the water and pour it in the bag a little at a time, instead of lifting the whole pot and pouring it directly in the bag.
4. While still wearing oven mitts, twist the top of the bag closed with one hand. Use the other hand to knead the bag to mix the fuel pellets and help break them down into sawdust. Keep doing this until you can see no visible chunks of fuel pellets. Be careful! The contents are very hot, and steam escaping from the mouth of the bag can burn you.
5. Use your string, twist tie or a rubber band to tie off the top of the bag tightly.
6. Wrap the bag in a towel and leave it aside overnight to cool down.

When your substrate is ready, it should be just wet enough that when you squeeze a handful of it, only a few drops of water should come out. If more water comes out, it is too wet, and could be prone to growing mold. If no water comes out and it's crumbly, it is too dry and the mushrooms may not grow. If your substrate doesn't have the right amount of water, you may want to drain some water or add some (boiled and cooled) water until it has the right amount of moisture.

Mixing in the grain spawn

1. Now that the substrate is pasteurized, we need to be careful not to allow any new microbes into it until the mushroom start growing. Because of this, you should wash your hands and wash or disinfect the work area where you'll be mixing in the grain spawn.
2. Place your grow bag in the area you've cleaned off and open the bag. Pour in the grain spawn, then tie the bag shut again. You'll notice the bag has a white patch on one side; tie off the bag above that patch. The patch is an air filter which will allow air in, but will keep out all microbes. The filtered air will help the mushrooms grow.
3. Knead or shake your bag until the grain spawn is mixed all the way through the sawdust. Gently press down the mixture (in the bag) a little bit to remove air pockets.

Growing

1. Put your sealed bag in a dark area that's around room temperature or slightly cooler, such as a closet.
2. Leave it alone for 2-3 weeks until the mycelium has fully colonized the bag. This will look like white fuzz growing through the sawdust. (The mycelium for lion's manes is more fine than the mycelium for other mushrooms, so it may not look as thick as you are used to, if you've grown other mushrooms like oyster mushrooms.)
3. Poke several holes in the bag, each an inch or two long. You can poke many holes to try and grow many smaller mushrooms, or a few holes to try for fewer larger mushrooms.
4. Put the bag in an area with bright but indirect light (not on a windowsill). You can spray dechlorinated water on the substrate a couple of times a day to make sure it doesn't dry out. To remove the chlorine from tap water, either boil it and allow it to cool, or leave it out in an uncovered container overnight.
5. Pins (baby mushrooms) should start growing within a week. Try not to spray water directly on the mushrooms, since that can inhibit growth.
6. When mushrooms start growing, check them daily. You can harvest them when they stop getting larger and the teeth (shaggy spines) start growing longer, which can take a week or two. You want to harvest them before they start turning brown or pink, because then they won't taste as good.
7. To harvest, use a knife to cut the whole mushroom off at the base, where it meets the bag. Handle it carefully, since it can bruise easily.
8. If refrigerated, lion's mane mushrooms can last for up to a week. If you harvest more than you can eat in a week, they can be dried out in a dehydrator or an oven.

How to use lion's mane mushrooms

Lion's mane mushrooms can be eaten raw or cooked. When cooked, they have a mild taste that's a bit like crab, and they're often used as a fish substitute in a variety of recipes. Try shredding them and making mock-crab cakes, or slicing them into steaks and pan-frying them in butter until they're golden brown. You can also cut or tear them into bite-sized pieces, pan-fry those until browned, and use the mushroom bites in place of fish for mock-fish tacos or mock-shrimp scampi. Lion's mane mushrooms are high in protein and fiber, so they're a useful meat substitute for vegetarian dishes.



What next?

If you would like to learn more about growing and cooking mushrooms, try reading one of these ebooks, available through Hoopla:

- Mushroom Cultivation <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12134905>
- DIY Mushroom Cultivation <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12402598>
- The Essential Guide To Cultivating Mushrooms <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/11693058>
- Cooking With Wild Mushrooms <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12374774>
- Mushroom Recipes: 219 Delicious Mushroom Recipes <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/13596501>