Any Questions? Need More Information?

Should you have any questions, call our Mushroom Hotline at (360) 426-9292. Our hours are 8:30am–4:30pm Pacific Time, Mondays through Fridays. We will be happy to help you! We also offer technical support for our products via email at info@fungi.com.

For more detailed information on mushroom cultivation, we suggest you consult the book *Growing Gourmet & Medicinal Mushrooms*, available from Fungi Perfecti for $44.95 plus shipping and handling. This book explains in detail cultivation techniques and growing parameters for 31 different edible and medicinal mushroom species. With 574 pages and more than 400 photographs and diagrams, this is the definitive text on mushroom cultivation for both hobbyist and professional growers.

We supply and instruct mushroom growers worldwide, amateurs and professionals alike. Contact us via phone, fax or email for a free color brochure. Or you can browse our complete product line and order securely with your Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover Card at our Web site, www.fungi.com.

If you purchased this Fungi Perfecti® product from another retailer or catalog company, please offer them the courtesy of your continued business. Thank you!

Fungi Perfecti, LLC
P.O. Box 7634 • Olympia, WA 98507, USA
ORDER LINE: (800) 780-9126 • PHONE: (360) 426-9292
FAX: (360) 426-9377 • EMAIL: info@fungi.com
www.fungi.com

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Enclosed is your Agrocybe aegerita mushroom kit, commonly referred to as the Pioppino mushroom. The Pioppino mushroom is a saprophyte, preferring to grow on hardwood logs and stumps especially those related to poplar. It is native to the Southeastern United States, Southern Europe, and East Asia.

We use nothing but natural ingredients in our mushroom kit formulations—no chemical additives or pesticides, just pure Certified Organic materials. Rigorous growth trials at the Fungi Perfecti farm have demonstrated that 100% Certified Organic shredded wheat straw is an excellent substrate for our unique Pioppino strain. Together we commonly call the colonized substrate a “block,” “kit,” or “mushroom patch.” As the mushroom mycelium grows, it locks hold of the substrate with a tight grip. Once colonized, the block can be fruited indoors and will produce 2–3 crops of mushrooms over its 2–3 month lifespan.

Before You Start

The Pioppino Mushroom Patch™ comes self-contained in a “spawn bag” and also includes a “humidity tent.” The Mushroom Patch needs to remain in the spawn bag to grow properly—please do not remove it from the bag.

Step-By-Step Instructions

1) Open the shipping box and inspect your Pioppino Mushroom Patch upon arrival. If you see any cracks or pieces broken away from the Patch, do not worry. The mushroom mycelium (white fuzzy material on the straw) is capable of re-growing after shipping as it adjusts to its new stationary home. If the Mushroom Patch still appears to be cracked or in pieces after one week, call Fungi Perfecti at (800) 780-9126 for assistance.

Please note: most water filters do not adequately remove chlorine; please use one the methods described here.

Humidity/Watering Your Mushroom Patch: Pioppino mushrooms require around 90–95% humidity in order to produce properly. Misting 2–3 times a day and covering your kit with the humidity tent will help maintain humidity. If you live in low humidity environment, you may need to mist more frequently. Also, for those living in dry climates, covering a few of the holes on the top of the humidity tent with clear tape will greatly increase the humidity and the chances of your Patch producing happy, healthy mushrooms. Some common factors that can prevent sufficient humidity are wood stoves, baseboard heaters, space heaters, and air conditioners—try to locate your Patch away from such fixtures.

If Mushrooms Stop Growing: If mushrooms stop growing and become dry and leathery, carefully remove the fruitbodies and continue misting. It may take an additional 2 weeks for new primordia to begin forming.

Spores: Mature mushrooms produce spores. You could think of spores as the microscopic “seeds” of the mushroom. Pioppino mushroom spores will appear as a brown dust or powder underneath the growing mushrooms. Spores will easily wipe off of most smooth surfaces such as painted wood or kitchen counter tops. Spores may be more difficult to clean off of tablecloths or other highly porous surfaces. For this reason, we suggest placing your Mushroom Patch on a surface that is easy to clean.

Thank you very much for purchasing our product! Keep in touch with Fungi Perfecti for new developments in indoor and outdoor cultivation of gourmet and medicinal mushrooms. Good luck, keep the mycelium running, and happy mushrooming!

The Folks at Fungi Perfecti
Your Pioppino Mushroom Patch should produce a total of 2–3 crops of mushrooms throughout its life.

The mushroom mycelium is an aerobic organism—just like you—and needs fresh air for gas exchange. The art of cultivation is a delicate balance between moisture replenishment and controlled, slow evaporation. Once you become familiar with the process, growing many types of mushrooms becomes easy and fun.

Cooking Pioppino Mushrooms

All mushrooms should be cooked before being eaten. Pioppino mushrooms are superb addition to stir fry, using olive or peanut oil, onions, garlic, nuts and other condiments. Many people prefer to cook them until they are light brown in color, usually after 10–15 minutes at medium-high temperatures. Add a small amount of butter, soy or tamari, and a touch of white wine. Cover and cook for several minutes checking occasionally and stirring. Spices can be added as desired. They are delicious when placed on rice or added to fish, chicken, or steak. There are many more ways to enjoy the fruits of your labors. For more inspiration, check out the cookbooks at www.fungi.com.

Helpful Hints

Water: When misting your Patch for indoor cultivation, it is important to use non-chlorinated, non-distilled water. Spring water, well water or rain water in a clean container are great choices as well. Avoid collecting rain water from roofs or gutters—these may introduce contaminants into the water.

If you have chlorinated tap water, you must remove the chlorine before using it for your Mushroom Patch. We suggest one of two methods:

1. Fill a pot of water, boil for 5–10 minutes, then cool to room temperature. Once cool, you can use this water. (Do not mist with hot water!)

2. Fill a pot of water, then let sit out for 24 to 48 hours—this will allow the chlorine to dissipate naturally.

2) Find a home for your Mushroom Patch.
A good location in your home to grow the Pioppino Mushroom Patch is one that:
◊ Has appropriate light: Your kit needs some ambient light to grow well. If there is enough light to read these instructions, there is enough light to grow mushrooms. Avoid direct sunlight: this can dry out your Mushroom Patch.
◊ Has a moderate temperature: Pioppino mushrooms prefer to grow in cooler temperatures ranging from 50–70 °F. If it is too cold, mushrooms will not form and mature as quickly. If too hot, mushrooms may form quickly, but may dry out and fail to mature. If these temperatures are cooler than the living space of your house or apartment, we recommend placing your mushroom patch in an anteroom. Examples include the laundry room, pantry, an entryway such as the ‘mud room,’ or simply on the floor next to a north facing wall.
◊ Is easily accessed for watering: Put your Patch in a place where you can easily water it and watch it grow. Locating it in a well-traveled part of your home will help you remember to water regularly. Surfaces that are water resistant and easy to clean are best.

3) Activate your Mushroom Patch.
To activate your Pioppino Mushroom Patch™, remove it from the box and place it—spawn bag and all—on a plate or pie pan in a location where temperatures range from 50–70 °F. Do not remove or open the spawn bag holding the colonized straw (the one with the white filter patch on it).

Let the block sit undisturbed in its bag until baby mushrooms (called primordia) begin to form. You will want to keep an eye on your
Mushroom Patch, since you will need to open the kit as soon as primordia begin to form. Pioppino primordia appear as tiny grayish-brown bumps that grow in clusters on the surface of the Patch, often near the sides. It can be difficult to spot them through the plastic, as condensation, loose substrate and fans of mushroom mycelium can often obstruct your view. So be sure to keep a close eye on developments inside the bag.

4) Open your Mushroom Patch.
Once primordia begin to form inside the bag, horizontally cut the top off of the bag, leaving a two inch collar above the surface of the kit.

5) Set up your Humidity Tent. Now that you’ve found a good location to leave your Patch, find the humidity tent that was included with your order (delivered wrapped around this instruction booklet). The humidity tent is a large plastic bag with holes. When used to cover the block, it will help hold in humidity and moisture while allowing some air flow. Open up the humidity tent and place it over the top of the Patch. Roll up the bottom of the tent, just as if you were rolling up your pant leg. Adjust so that the top of the tent sits about 6–8 inches above the top of the cut-open Mushroom Patch bag.

6) Water your Mushroom Patch. For misting, use a plant mister or a common spray bottle—make sure the bottle is clean and free of chemical residues. If you do not already have a mister bottle, you should be able to find one at a local store. Start misting your kit 2–4 times a day with non-chlorinated, non-distilled water (please see the Helpful Hints section near the end of this booklet for more information about water). Each time you mist, spray the surface of the kit several times. You may also spray the inside of the humidity tent—this will help maintain humidity in drier climates. After each misting, be sure to put the humidity tent back over your Patch. Ideally, the exposed mycelium should be held at or near the dew point, with beads of moisture continuously forming on the cottony surface. Beads of moisture are a good sign and will encourage more primordia to form.

7) Mushrooms! Continue misting your Mushroom Patch 2-3 times daily and enjoy watching the primordia mature into full-grown mushrooms. Occasionally, additional primordia will form at the edges of the kit underneath the plastic. If this happens, simply cut away the plastic that is oppressing them to liberate the trapped mushrooms. Be careful not to cut deeply into the mycelium or to open the plastic more than is necessary. Mushrooms thrive at around 90–95% humidity. If mushrooms start to grow and then stop, appearing dry and becoming leathery in texture, this is a sign that humidity was not high enough. Please refer to the Humidity section in Helpful Hints on page 5 if you are experiencing problems.

Pioppino mushrooms start out a dark chocolate brown in color and lighten as they mature. Your mushrooms will reach maturity approximately 1–2 weeks after the primordia begin forming. The best stage to harvest is when the mushrooms have not yet flattened—in other words, when they are still convex, or shaped like an umbrella. Pioppino mushrooms store best when harvested before the veils (white membranes covering the gills) break. Use a knife or pair of scissors to trim the mushroom as close to the block as possible. Once the mushrooms have been harvested, resume misting as described above.

8) Producing Additional Crops. After your first crop of mushrooms, simply continue misting the Patch for another 2 weeks to encourage additional fruitings. Since the baby mushrooms prefer to form in a high CO₂ environment, additional fruitings may occur around the edge of the plastic spawn bag where humidity and CO₂ tend to be the highest. Should this happen, trim the bag as described in section 7.
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Do not be concerned if some water collects between the remaining plastic and the side surfaces of the block. This water reservoir will serve to remoisten the substrate as the mushrooms grow. This excess water should be dumped every 3–4 days, or whenever it begins to fill the bag.

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Clusters of primordia forming within the plastic spawn bag.

The same primordia from a similar angle, with the spawn bag cut away to show the mushrooms more clearly.
The Pioppino Mushroom Patch™
(Agrocybe aegerita)

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**Fungi Perfecti, LLC**

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