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!

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The Maitake Mushroom Patch™

Maitake mushrooms (*Grifola frondosa = Polyporus frondosus*) are native to the temperate regions of Japan, North America and Europe. In Japanese, Maitake literally means “dancing mushroom,” a name originating from an ancient fable where a chance encounter between a band of male woodcutters and nuns occurred at the site where this mushroom was first found. According to fable, the ensuing meal led to dance, song and other activities. In Northeastern North America this mushroom is known as Hen-of-the-Woods for its distinctive appearance, resembling the fluffed feathers of a hen.

A true saprophyte, Maitake mushrooms are often found at the base of dead or dying oak or elm trees. Their overlapping fronds (gray in color) and pored under surface allow the easy identification of this species. Your Maitake Mushroom Patch can be cultivated on a counter or tabletop and thrives where temperatures hover within the 50–70 °F range. This method of cultivation will usually result in one flush of Maitake weighing .5 to 1 pound. However, subsequent fruitings may be achieved by planting the Patch outdoors in a bed of hardwood sawdust, peat moss, sand gravel, or rocky soil. By planting your Maitake Patch outside, you can extend its life span and enjoy a bonus flush after getting an initial indoor crop. This method of cultivation is discussed later in the instructions.

**Please note:** Mature mushrooms produce spores. Spores will appear as a white dust or powder on the surface around the Patch or on the Patch itself. Spores are easily wiped off of most smooth surfaces such as painted wood and Formica, but may stick to tablecloths or other highly porous surfaces. Please take this into consideration when selecting the ideal location for your Patch.

### Indoor Cultivation

The Maitake Mushroom Patch consists of a block of substrate level. Allow the wound created from the cut to dry over for a day or two and then recover with dry sawdust. Once harvested, the Maitake Mushroom Patch will go into dormancy for several months. Another flush is possible when the seasons roll through the “fruiting” range of temperatures and moisture.

### Cooking Maitake Mushrooms

**Please note:** mushrooms should always be cooked before they are eaten. Maitake mushrooms are super when cooked in a stir-fry using virgin olive oil, scallions, almonds, and light soy sauce. Turn the pan on high, add olive oil, and quickly chop up the Maitake into 2–4 inch slices. When handfuls of Maitake are thrown into the pan, the oil sizzles and pops in response. Waiting a few seconds, begin turning the Maitake over and over every few minutes. The mass of Maitake is quickly reduced as it releases excess water. After much of this Maitake water has cooked off, scallions (onions) and almonds are added. The mushroom fronds are best cooked, in my opinion, when the mushroom pieces become golden brown along the edges. (Interestingly, if you over-cook Maitake, i.e. cook it until almost burnt, the flavor resembles bacon.) We have found that Maitake and Shiitake combine wonderfully, with Maitake providing a foundation flavor and Shiitake imparting rich overtones. After stir-frying, you have created a base which can be added to a wide variety of dishes, including:

1. Mixed into seafood of all types: shrimp, scallops, salmon, tuna & white fish
2. Steamed into rice dishes
3. Served simply on wheat crackers
4. Used to make a Maitake pâté
5. Added to salads
6. Added to soups

Meals of extraordinary dimensions can be created, limited only by your imagination.

Thanks for purchasing our product! We wish you luck in your future fungal endeavors.

The Folks at Fungi Perfecti
the Patch can be placed outdoors. The best locations for outdoor cultivation are partially shaded, protected from mid-day and late-day sun. A naturally moist, shady location is best, under the shade of existing vegetation or on the north side of your home. Avoid planting in direct sun or overly dry locations.

**How to Plant:** By placing your Maitake Patch in a bed of moistened hardwood sawdust (oak, elm, cottonwood, poplar, alder or aspen), it can draw nutrients from the surrounding environment, to support another crop. There are enough nutrients within it to produce without extra supplements. If you cannot find sawdust, then sand or loose, woody, even gravely soils will suffice. You should not use super-enriched potting soils or composted soils, as they will cause the Maitake Patch to sour. Dig a hole, approximately 10” deep by 12” by 12” wide. Strip the remains of the plastic bag from around the block. The upper surface of the block will have become tough and leathery over time and is not likely to produce again. The bottom has been protected by the plastic and is a much better prospect for the formation of new mushrooms, so place the Patch in the hole upside down. Bury the Maitake Patch so that the surface is covered by no more than 1” of material. Alternatively, you can bury the Patch in a 5-gallon bucket of sawdust, sand or other materials, using the same technique described above.

**Extended Care:** Once planted, the Maitake Patch requires little attention. As seasonal rains come and go, the Maitake Patch will be stimulated into production, especially when ground temperatures hover between 50–70 °F. The Maitake Patch should not be directly watered until ground temperatures are within this prescribed range. The Maitake Patch can freeze, even be covered with a layer of snow, and not be harmed. A common option is to let Nature take over. Here, the strategy of benign neglect is often best.

**Harvest:** Same as for the indoor method: when the petal-like fronds extend and begin to brown along the edges, the mushrooms should be harvested by cutting the Maitake cluster from the base, at ground colonized by the mushroom mycelium. We use only natural ingredients in our formulation, no chemical additives or pesticides, just pure Northwest alder chips and sawdust and certified organic nutritional supplements. The Patch is contained in a spawn bag with a white filter patch that has a date and letter code denoting genus and species. **The Patch needs to remain in the spawn bag for the first step: keep it sealed until instructed to open the bag.** Included with the Patch is a plastic bag with holes punched in it; this is the humidity tent. The humidity tent is used to maintain a high moisture environment in the area directly around the Patch. The humidity tent can be suspended by a variety of means so that it remains inflated over the Patch.

In addition, you will need a spray bottle and a shallow container in which to place the Patch. A plate, pie tin or similar container is ideal. (It is best to regularly dump out any water that accumulates in the container.) Do not use a high-walled container because that will cause carbon dioxide to pool around your Patch and affect the growth of the mushrooms. You should use water that is neither chlorinated nor distilled. Spring water, well water or rainwater is recommended. Distilled or heavily filtered water lacks minerals and nutrients that the mushrooms need to grow. If you do not have access to any of these, you can gently boil tap water for 20 minutes, which will cause the chlorine to dissipate. Once cool, you can use it to water your Mushroom Patch.

For indoor cultivation, we recommend the following possible locations: a basement, porch, verandah, garage, “mud” room, or any place that will have temperatures swinging between 50–70 °F. This place should have exposure to indirect natural light. If there is enough light to read these instructions, then there is enough light for your Maitake Patch.

**Getting Started**

1. When you receive your Patch, remove it from the box and place the sealed bag containing your Maitake Patch on a shelf or tabletop. **Do not open the bag yet.** At this point in its life cycle, your Maitake Patch is a self-sufficient environment, with humidity and air exchange that is ideal for the formation of primordia, (baby mushrooms).
After 3–5 weeks at 50–70 °F, you should notice grayish, fuzzy mounds forming on the surface of the block (Figure 1). The dark gray primordial mounds will grow slowly at first, taking two weeks or more before there is a sudden burst of growth. The nearly flat mounds will become more dome-shaped, pushing upwards and forming smooth balls about the size of a golf ball. Once they near the end of this stage in their growth cycle and at least 60 days have passed since the date on the filter patch, proceed to the next step.

2. It is time to open the bag. Simply cut a horizontal slice in the top of the bag containing the Patch. This provides a slight increase in the oxygen available to the Patch that stimulates growth and encourages the fronds to grow from the primordial mound. At this stage in their growth cycle you will see increasing differentiation of ridges or folds on the top (Figure 2). Often these folds will have little droplets of moisture forming on them. Cover with the humidity tent and begin misting 2–3 times a day with non-chlorinated/non-distilled water. Maintain your Patch like this for 2–3 days. Maitake mushrooms form best when the humidity remains constant.

3. After 2–3 days, trim the top and sides of the bag away so that the bag encases only the bottom and sides of the block, leaving a 1–1½” collar above the surface of the block. Punch a few small drainage holes in the bottom of the spawn bag. Place your Maitake Patch on a plate, pie pan or similar shallow container, and cover with the humidity tent. Make sure the tent is not in contact with the sides of the Patch. Water the Patch three times a day, using a spray bottle. Spray the water onto the inside of the humidity tent, rather than onto the Patch itself. As long as there is condensation on the inside of the humidity tent, your Patch is getting enough water. The golf ball cluster(s) of Maitake will begin to unfold into overlapping petals or leaflets as the Maitake matures (Figure 3). The dark gray color gradually fades as the mushrooms mature and the leaflets flatten and extend revealing the pore layer underneath. Eventually, about 1–2 weeks after cutting away the bag, the mushrooms will achieve full maturity. Sometimes Maitake will fail to form distinct fronds, however this is normal in certain environments. It is important to harvest your mushroom 2 weeks after opening the bag for the best culinary experience, even if it has not yet fully matured. Maitake mushrooms left to fruit longer than this can begin to spoil.

4. Stop watering 1 day before harvesting to discourage bacterial blotch, a common contaminant in Maitake fruiting. Typically, the fully mature Maitake is light gray, with brown streaks and darkened outer edges on petals (Figure 4). Harvest the Maitake by cutting the mushroom with a knife as close to the surface of the block as possible. The mushroom may come away with a small amount of substrate (mostly sawdust) clinging to the base, so you may have to trim away additional portions of the mushrooms before using them.

Don’t discard your harvested Maitake Patch yet, there are more opportunities ahead!

Outdoor Cultivation

Once you have harvested your first crop of Maitake, it is unlikely to produce again indoors, unless you are exceptionally lucky or gifted. However, you can launch it outdoors with ease, and often times be rewarded with another bouquet of Maitake in the spring or early fall.

After the first harvest, stop watering your Maitake Patch until you decide on its best outdoor location. If you do not yet have the place or the opportunity to start outdoor cultivation, you can store the Patch in a garage, basement or other convenient location out of direct sunlight for several weeks to several months. After this period of dormancy,
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If you purchased this Fungi Perfecti® product from another retailer or catalog company, please offer them the courtesy of your continued business. Thank you!

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