DIY GOURMET MUSHROOM GROWING

Mushroom Zen Academy | FREE beginner roadmap | Owner-review draft

This free guide shows the big picture of growing edible mushrooms from cultures or spawn. It is an overview, **not** a complete how-to for sterile work. At each stage, use the detailed Academy download named below for materials, setup, troubleshooting and instructions. Some downloads are planned and not yet released.

Not the ready-to-colonize kit route: Mushroom Zen Academy grow kits already contain spawn mixed with substrate. Kit customers should use the Start Here guide and their species guide instead. This DIY route is for starting from separately obtained edible mushroom culture or spawn and appropriate supplies.

1. Choose your edible mushroom and supplies

Pick an edible species, suitable grain or substrate, containers, labels and a reliable culture or spawn source. Different species need different fruiting conditions.

Go deeper: Detailed download: DIY Growing Supplies & Species Planning Checklist (planned).

2. Build and prepare a still air box (SAB)

A SAB is a simple enclosed work area that helps limit moving air during transfers. You need to learn how to construct it, position the armholes, clean it and work inside without disturbing the air. A SAB does not sterilize materials.

Go deeper: Detailed download: How to Build and Use a Still Air Box (SAB) (planned).

3. Prepare and sterilize grain

Grain needs appropriate hydration, packaging and validated sterilization before inoculation. This is not the same as preparing bulk substrate. Follow equipment manufacturer safety directions.

Go deeper: Detailed download: Grain Preparation & Sterilization Guide (planned).

4. Learn about agar and liquid culture

Agar is a nutrient gel used to observe and transfer fungal growth; liquid culture suspends mycelium in nutrient liquid. Clean technique and contamination checks matter before moving a culture to grain.

Go deeper: Detailed downloads: Beginner Agar Guide; Liquid Culture Basics (planned).

5. Inoculate your grain

Introduce verified edible culture or spawn to prepared grain using the transfer method appropriate to the material and your clean-work setup. Label with species, source and date.

Go deeper: Detailed download: Inoculating Grain Bags in a SAB (planned).

6. Watch colonization and check for contamination

Healthy mycelium gradually spreads through the grain. Appearance and speed vary by species. Keep suspicious bags sealed; avoid smelling or opening them.

Go deeper: Detailed downloads: Colonization & Shake-and-Break Guide (planned); Contamination & Troubleshooting (review draft available).

7. Move colonized grain to fruiting substrate

Some methods combine fully colonized grain with suitable bulk substrate; others fruit from a prepared block. Match the substrate and container to the species.

Go deeper: Detailed download: Mixing Spawn With Bulk Substrate (planned).

8. Set up fruiting conditions

Mushrooms need the right combination of humidity, fresh air, light and temperature. An X-cut is useful for some bag-fruiting methods, but not for every species or setup.

Go deeper: Detailed downloads: Fruiting Chambers & Species-Specific Fruiting (planned); kit species guides (review drafts available).

9. Recognize pins and harvest

Pins are the first tiny visible baby mushrooms. Learn what healthy pins look like for your species, then harvest at the appropriate stage and store promptly.

Go deeper: Detailed download: Pinning, Harvesting & Storage (planned).

10. Record your grow and learn

Write down dates, temperatures, observations, contamination issues and harvest results. Small records make your next grow easier.

Go deeper: Detailed download: Mushroom Zen Academy Grow Journal (review draft available).

Safety: Work only with appropriately sourced edible species. Do not guess pressure-sterilization settings or open contaminated cultures. Follow validated procedures and equipment instructions.