

Lesson 1

How to care for your mushroom kit

COMPULSORY



Please join our private Facebook group. This group is an easy channel of communication between AMGA and teachers as well as a great resource for trouble shooting the kits and sharing ideas with each other.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/350892906098845/>

Watch this video for instructions. <https://youtu.be/gfpaPkU34fg>

To care for your kit, you will need a spray bottle filled with water.

Step 1. Find a good spot for your mushroom growing kit.

Mushroom kits do **not** need to be in complete darkness, but they do need to be out of direct sunlight. They are OK to be in the classroom, but not under a window, air conditioner or heater.

Step 2. IMPORTANT: How to know if your kit is ready.

Open the box. If the compost looks brown, this means the mycelium is not ready. Close the kit and leave it for a week. Once the compost is frosty white, you can continue to Step 3.

If the compost is brown, this is a great chance to teach the students about compost and mycelium, so you can skip to “Lesson 5 – Compost and Life Cycle”. Students can continue to check their kits and watch the mycelium grow.

NOT QUITE READY...



READY! (See? It's ALL frosty white!)



Step 3. Put your kit together.

Once the compost is frosty white with mycelium, it's time to put your kit together. Open the plastic which is covering the compost and fold it over the sides of the box. Open the bag of peat moss (or 'casing') and spread it over the compost, leaving it loose and fluffy (do not press down). Leave the kit open, do not replace the lid. Spray thoroughly with water, so the peat moss is like a wet sponge. (See FAQ's for detailed explanation).

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Step 4. Maintaining your kit.

Check your mushroom kit regularly, to ensure the compost is **always** damp. Spray with water when required. After a couple of weeks, mushrooms will begin to form. You will see small white bulbs appear – this is your mushrooms “Pinning”. The mushrooms will double in size every day. This process is explained in the lesson plans.

Step 5. Harvesting

To get the most out of your kit, its best to harvest your mushrooms before they get too big and before the mushroom caps unfurl completely. However, you may want to let your students decide and experiment. Allowing the mushrooms to grow bigger will show the students the different stages of the mushroom from button, to cup, to Portobello.

When it’s time to harvest, TWIST each mushroom gently. Do not pull it out, as this will disturb the mycelium. If the mushroom leaves a hole, cover it over with the surrounding peat moss.

FAQ’s

How much should I water my kit?

Always use a spray bottle. Think of a wet sponge that is filled with water. It’s full of water, but not dripping. If you squeeze it, the water will run out.

In the cooler months, you may only need to spray your kit every 2 or 3 days. In warmer months, it could be every day. Keep monitoring your peat moss to ensure it is like a wet sponge.

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