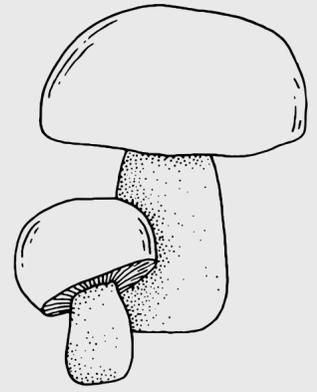


How are Mushrooms grown now?



Mushroom growing in Australia is now a highly technical process and industry.

Mushroom farms use indoor growing rooms with carefully controlled temperature and humidity, air flow and watering techniques.

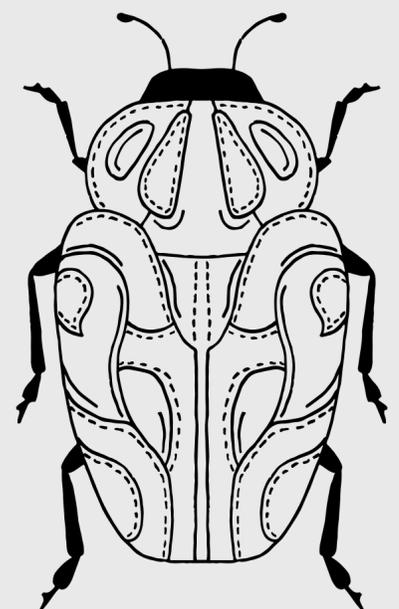
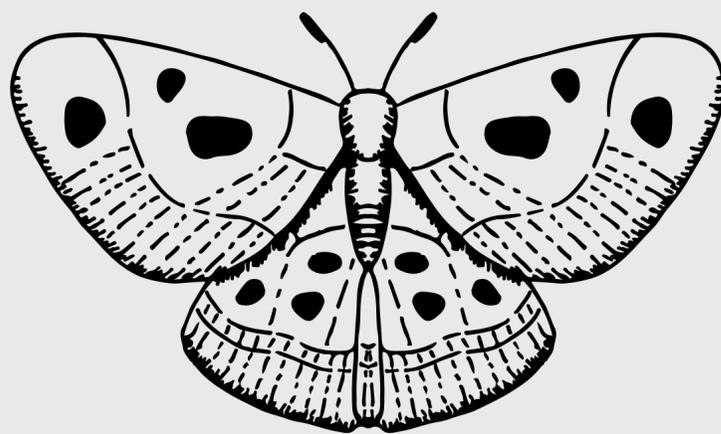
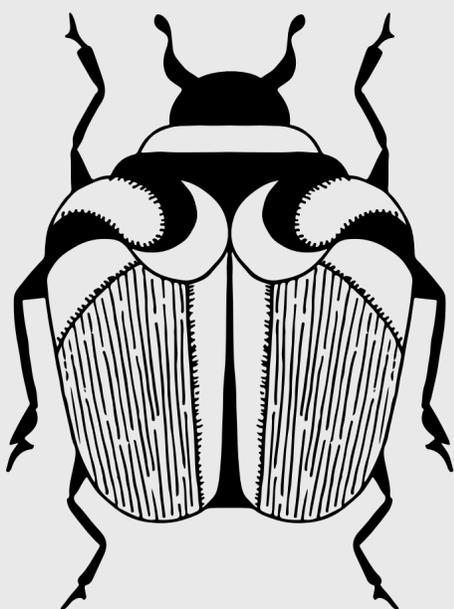
Careful attention is paid to hygiene and environmental issues to maximise production in a sustainable way.

Have a group discussion about how you ensure sustainability at your school?

The process starts with the farmer preparing the compost - called **substrate** - needed to grow the mushrooms.

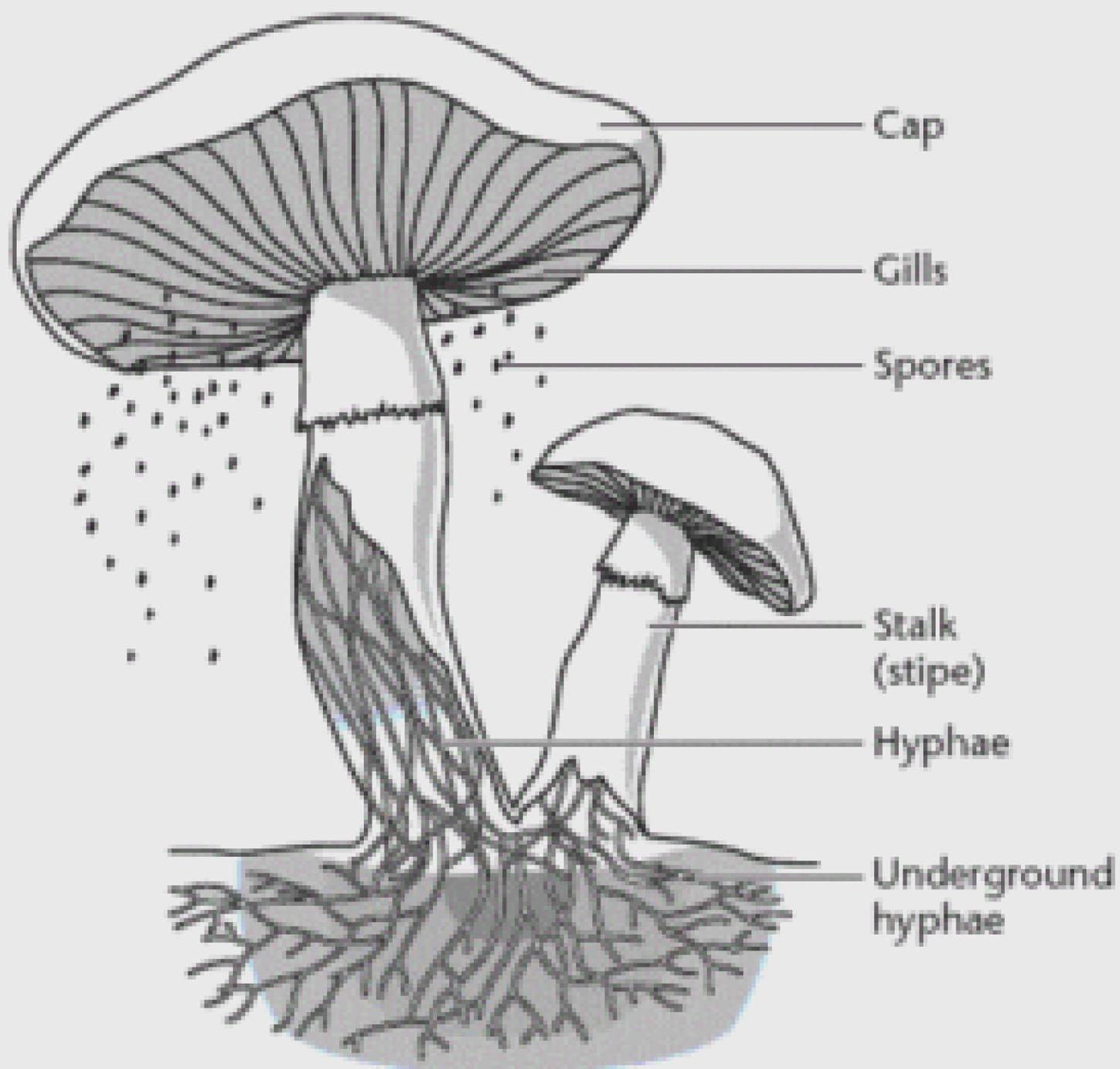
In effect, the farmer must create the food source needed by mushroom spawn to grow.

This substrate is then pasteurized to eliminate weed seeds, insects and unwanted micro-organisms.



Unlike green plants that are produced from seeds, mushrooms reproduce through microscopic particles called spores produced in the gills under a mushroom cap.

See attached image to identify spores, gills and mushroom cap.



Parts of a Fungus

Mushroom farmers obtain spawn from sterile laboratories.

The spawn is spread on trays full of the substrate in rooms that are carefully climate controlled to promote growth.

Their root system consists of a web-like mass called **mycelium** which allows the mushroom spores to retrieve the nutrients in the substrate.



The substrate is covered with a layer of peat moss.

Within three weeks small mushrooms appear on the peat moss.

This is called pinning. All harvesting is done by hand.

The mushrooms are processed, packed and refrigerated quickly before being shipped to restaurants or food stores within 24 hours of being picked.

Where have you seen mushrooms? In the supermarket or at the farmers market?

