

Growing Mushrooms Without Land, Year-Round

By Bobbi Espinoza and Judy Newton

While most people use their basement for storage or as a family room, Ben Mueller and Walker Santos use Ben's to grow mushrooms. Out of their interest in mushrooms for culinary and medicinal purposes, Mojo Mushroom Farms was born! They are now a staple at the Olney Farmers Market.

The growing process starts by creating the environment, in bags, that simulates the logs that mushrooms ordinarily grow on. Wood pellets are combined with leaves from soy stalks with bean husks.



For 20 hours, they are placed in an insulated sterilization closet of up to 200 degrees. That sterilizes the bag's contents and removes almost everything that impedes the mushroom's growth.



Then, mushroom spores are added to the bags to create mycelium, a white, root-like substance that mushrooms need to grow. The bags are placed in a humid room for up to 3 weeks to keep the soil damp.



When the entire top is covered with mycelium, the bags are moved into a room kept at 50 degrees where the mushrooms grow from the top of the open bags.



Oyster mushrooms push through the top of the bag.



Depending on the type of mushroom, it typically takes from 5 days to 1 month to grow, with some taking up to 5 months. The bags are used several few times, until its contents are gone. It is not a quick process!

Mojo Mushrooms grows several types of mushrooms; Lions Mane, King Oyster, Black Pearl Oyster, Black Poplar, Chicken of the Woods and Chestnut. They are excited about their new 10,000 square foot warehouse facility where they can increase production to keep up with their growing demand and grow more varieties. They can also make the mushrooms even more affordable!

Stop by their stand at the Olney Market, find out about the interesting flavors the mushrooms simulate and get a recipe card! Visit mojomushroomfarms.com for more information.