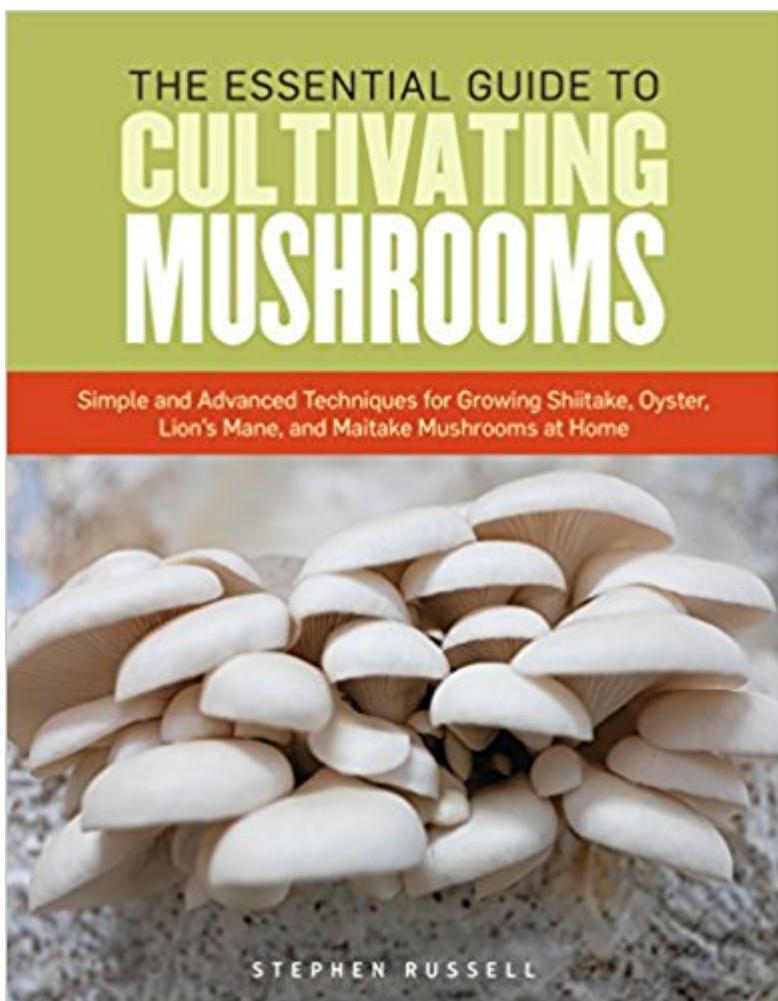


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# The Essential Guide To Cultivating Mushrooms: Simple And Advanced Techniques For Growing Shiitake, Oyster, Lion's Mane, And Maitake Mushrooms At Home





## Synopsis

From the basics of using mushroom kits to working with grain spawn, liquid cultures, and fruiting chambers, Stephen Russell covers everything you need to know to produce mouthwatering shiitakes, oysters, lion's manes, maitakes, and portobellos. Whether you're interested in growing them for your own kitchen or to sell at a local market, you'll soon be harvesting a delicious and abundant crop of mushrooms.Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Harvest Mushrooms at Home Learn to grow the most popular species - Oyster, Shiitake, Lion's Mane, and Maitake - in controlled indoor environments at home. Beginning with the best ways to ensure success with a kit and proceeding through advanced techniques for creating sawdust spawn, working with liquid cultures and fruiting chambers, and much more, Stephen Russell covers everything the home grower needs to know. A trusted reference for market growers, this book is also the perfect companion for hobbyists craving a steady supply of dinner-table mushrooms.

Stephen Russell owns The Hoosier Mushroom Company, the retail outlet for his mushroom farm (<http://www.mushroomfarm.com/about-our-company.html>). He founded the The Hoosier Mushroom Society and travels throughout the year speaking at clubs, festivals, and conferences. He lives in Bloomington, Indiana.

Two books on mushroom cultivation have just hit the market and they are both excellent. They have many similarities but some key differences as well; in a nutshell, one book is an absolutely thorough and yet very easy to understand guide to everything you need to know about how to cultivate mushrooms, with great photos. The second is all that, plus several other sections thrown in that at first glance you may say, "I don't need to know about that." but once you start reading you think "Wow, I think I'm going to try that!" So, which book is for you? Read on. I'm just going to come right out and say it now: *The Essential Guide to Cultivating Mushrooms* and *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* are the best books on the topic currently available. It's ironic that, not one, but two excellent cultivation books should come out at the same time, as up to now there were not many choices to those of us interested in home cultivation of mushrooms. (Indeed, the paucity of information out there on cultivation was a big impetus for us at FUNGI magazine to start up such a regular feature several years ago.) Probably everyone from beginner to commercially-successful grower has a copy of Paul Stamets' book *Growing Gourmet and Medicinal Mushrooms* (1993, 2000). I turn to it often at my home, but it's in need of an update and makeover; swapping out the black and white photos for color would be nice too. Stamets' more recent *Mycelium Running* does offer a section on cultivation, but the strength of that book lies in several other unrelated topics. Besides Stamets, some general books on mycology or wild mushrooms might have a single chapter on cultivation but without a whole lot of information that a beginner might need on how to make growth media or make sterile cultures from wild harvested mushrooms. One such example is the quirky and out of date *Mushrooms in the Garden* published in 1981 by Hellmut Steineck. Enter Stephen Russell and Tradd Cotter. Stephen Russell owns The Hoosier Mushroom Company, a retail outlet for his mushroom farm. Russell (who resides in Bloomington, Indiana) founded the Hoosier Mushroom Society and travels throughout the year speaking at clubs, festivals, and conferences. Tradd Cotter is a microbiologist, professional mycologist, and organic gardener. Cotter owns Mushroom Mountain, a company that develops applications for mushrooms in various industries and currently maintains over 200 species of fungi for food production, mycoremediation of environmental pollutants, and natural alternatives to chemical pesticides. Cotter (who resides in Liberty, South Carolina) is a founding member of the South Carolina Upstate Mycological Society. Russell's *Essential Guide to Cultivating Mushrooms* is very easy to read, has excellent large (and abundant) photos, and is very affordably priced. The main strengths of the book are in learning techniques. The book progresses from beginner doing very basic cultivation through more advanced chapters focusing on how to make all sorts of growth and incubation media at your own

home and with pretty basic or easy to obtain equipment. Additionally, Russell does a good job at instructing how you can make some of your own equipment, for example a sterile glove box for performing sterile transfers and inoculations of cultures (and also gives prudent advice on how not to blow up your glovebox—“with your arms inside” during routine sterilization!).

Cotter’s *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* also gives excellent instruction on basic and advanced techniques, and progresses from beginner to more advanced inoculation and culturing skills. Cotter also emphasizes low-tech (and even no-tech) equipment you can easily source or make yourself; the color photos are equally excellent, large-sized, and abundant. Where *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* gets some extra stars are in some additional chapters on things you can do with fungi to further your fun with fungi cultivation; e.g. making food products like tempeh and beer, using fungi for mycoremediation, making extracts from culinary or medicinal mushrooms, and fun projects for school students to try in their classrooms.

There’s something for everyone: natural mushroom dyes, paper making, even how to make your own cultures from just about any mushroom and long-term storage techniques. In the final of four sections, called “Meet the Cultivated Mushrooms” (Cotter emulates a similar final section in *Mycelium Running*), we get a really nice synopsis of many wild mushrooms that can be cultivated, species by species, and a brief overview for each, considering cultivation notes, substrate, mushroom development, preservation of fruitbodies, uses including notes on nutrition and purported medicinal properties, and even market potential. I recommend that anyone interested in mushroom cultivation should pick up a copy of both books. You cannot go wrong. The cultivation techniques favored by each author are not the same and you may find yourself more comfortable with one style over another. And you may not find this out until you have been at it for a while. A major theme of both Russell’s and Cotter’s books are that you can do this at home using low tech. The *Essential Guide to Cultivating Mushrooms* and *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* emphasize that you should start small and gain proficiency. *Organic Mushroom Farming and Mycoremediation* goes a step further, showing how you can continue to scale up and up, if you want to, becoming a full scale mushroom farmer. I say go for it! Mushroom growing is a fun and rewarding experience. It’s not difficult (once you learn a few basic techniques). And it’s sustainable and good for the environment. And the world needs more mushroom farmers.-Britt A. Bunyard(Review originally published in FUNGI, 2014, vol 7 no.5.)

This is an excellent book to start. For beginners and beyond. You get right away a good picture of what is involved in cultivating mushroom. I confess I was just curious but, at the end of this book, I

got hooked. Thank you Stephen Russel. I really suggest you read this one before any other. Then, make room and time for others, of course. This is a fascinating field to explore.

This book covers the basics of mushroom cultivation in a clear and accessible way, with thorough photographic illustrations. It's a great starter volume for anyone who might be interested in advancing beyond the prepared kits (or is wondering what to do with the leftover spawn after the kit has finished fruiting). The printing and paper quality feel good, the book is a nice intermediate size. For a book of technical instructions I actually found it quite enjoyable to read.

This is simply the best book on cultivating mushrooms that I have ever read. The book does a fine job of providing enough science and horticulture to answer the "why" questions the reader has, but it is also fun to read. The tone of the book is conversational, and it is full of useful diagrams and illustrations. The book takes you from the complete novice stage up through a thriving industrial partner. Well done!

This book is wonderfully illustrated, written, and laid out. It is a perfect introduction to the techniques and pitfalls of beginning mushroom cultivation. All phases of the cultivation cycle are covered, and I highly recommend it for anyone starting out in this fruitful hobby!

Very detailed and informative. I haven't gotten to utilize the information contained within it to start my own mushroom farm, but I'm considering it in the future. It will be a great reference source for that, if it happens.

great balance between a text book, and a beginners guide with color picture

I am enjoying this book very much. It is an easy read, has simple instructions and has "how to" pictures on practically every page. The author also gives practical advise. I highly recommend.

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