



## Lion's Mane Grow Block Instructions

Lion's Mane is one of the easier varieties to grow at home and we cultivate two resilient strains which can thrive in a wide range of temperatures. The ideal temperatures are listed below but they can still fruit in temperatures outside this range with varied results. If you cannot open your block right away, **put it in the fridge where it can stay for up to 3 months**. We use these blocks to grow all the mushrooms on our farm. They contain over 3kg of our all-natural substrate made with W.A. Eucalyptus, legumes and rain water.

Heirloom strain: 9-27°C

Heat Tolerant strain: 15-32°C

- ❖ Lion's Mane mushrooms need light to grow properly. Ambient natural light is best but any household lights will work fine. **Direct sunlight will dry the block out.**
- ❖ The best location is usually a bathroom used for showers since this keeps your block humid and can also make it easier to remember to spray 2-3 times per day. A bathroom floor or vanity works great.
- ❖ They need an area of the house without air-conditioning or heating systems which decrease the relative humidity and will cause your mushrooms to dry out.
- ❖ Lion's Mane is vulnerable to drying out and will begin to yellow when this happens. If your mushrooms dry out and stop growing, remove them and your block will try again if you keep it humid.
- ❖ While it is possible to fruit them outside in certain conditions such as a greenhouse, you will usually run into problems with fruit flies etc.

### 1. Opening:

Your block is marked with a line where we recommend cutting it open for the best results. Use a clean knife or box cutter. You want the slit to remain closed to retain moisture in the block. You will see growth happening inside the bag away from the cut area and this is normal, especially for Lion's Mane. **Do not make additional cuts where you see this growth.** Growing Lion's Mane vertically is fine but we prefer the results from horizontal growth with the cut facing sideways, not upwards, especially for the strains we cultivate.

### 2. Fruiting:

All you need to do is lightly mist the cut 2-3 times per day with a spray bottle of water - rain or filtered water is best but tap water also works fine. Spray a fine mist over the cut and surrounding plastic to increase the humidity and protect the delicate mushrooms as they begin to form. If you opted for a humidity bag, first roll down the top a few times so that it stays open to allow fresh air exchange for your mushrooms. Only roll it down enough to make it somewhat rigid but still leave a large enclosure for your mushrooms to grow inside. Place the bag on a flat surface with the rolled top facing sideways and then place your grow block inside, at the back of this enclosure, with the cut on your block facing outwards. Mist inside the walls of the humidity bag as well as the plastic around the cut on your block. The block will start to produce white growths from the cuts which will then push their way out to form the Lion's Mane. Keep misting at least 2-3 times per day until they are ready to harvest. Constant humidity results in higher quality Lion's Mane. If you grow more than one block in the same room, it can be best to leave the door open or else the CO2 exhaled by your mushrooms will build up. Insufficient oxygen will cause Lion's Mane to grow in fuzzy coral formations. This is normal for our "Heat Tolerant" strain in the early stages of growth but it will turn into dense Lion's Mane as it grows to maturity. Bare in mind that too much airflow can also cause problems, evaporating moisture from your mushrooms and drying them out.

### 3. Harvesting:

Lion's Mane mushrooms are typically ready 12-16 days after opening the block but the speed is affected by many factors such as the average temperature. When they have almost reached their full size, their spines will form and begin to elongate. For our "**Heat Tolerant**" strain, the best time to harvest is when the spines are 2-4mm long before it releases its spores. For the "**Heirloom**" strain, you can leave them to elongate slightly more until the spines are 6-8mm long. Your Lion's Mane will have a smooth and slightly sweet flavour when picked young but can become bitter when left until the spines have fully elongated. To harvest, you can pull the Lion's Mane away from the block gently, removing as little of the substrate with it as possible. After harvesting, remove any leftover bits of mushroom from the block as these will decompose. You can find photos of Lion's Mane ready to harvest on our website or Facebook/Instagram:

@skipworthmushrooms

### 4. Storage & Cooking:

Your freshly harvested Lion's Mane needs to go straight in the fridge. A sealed container with some paper towel inside works best. Lion's Mane bruises easily so it is best to minimise handling. It has a longer fridge life than most other gourmet mushrooms, lasting 2-3 weeks in the fridge if it is harvested young. It will yellow over time but remain edible. It pulls apart like chicken or can be cut into slices about 1cm thick to fry flat in a pan. A trick for the best flavour and texture with Lion's Mane is to "dry fry" it with no butter/oil using a low heat for a few minutes on both sides until light golden brown, salting both sides as you go to help release moisture. Then, increase the heat to medium and add butter and any desired seasoning such as garlic to continue frying until properly golden brown on both sides. Lion's Mane is excellent in soups and will soak up anything it is cooked with. It can be marinated like meat, made into "pulled pork" or battered for crispy mushroom "fried chicken". Many more cooking suggestions can be found online.

### 5. Additional flushes:

Your block can produce 2-4 smaller flushes after your large first flush depending on the environment and level of care. After a harvest, keep misting the block every day and you will begin to see the formation of new pins after about 3-7 days. If the block seems dry after a few flushes, it can be soaked for a few hours in a sink or large container which can help it to produce some more mushrooms. As the mycelium continues to consume the nutrients in the substrate, the harvests will become gradually smaller. For this reason, we only keep these blocks in our grow room for 2 flushes before they are added to our compost pile.

### 6. Compost:

Once the mushroom block has stopped producing flushes, this "mushroom compost" can be spread in your garden as an excellent soil conditioner and mulch. It can be mixed in at 25-50% with potting soil or mulch - using mushroom compost alone can result in nutrient levels becoming too high for most plants. However, some plants such as capsicums and chillies like to be planted with 100% mushroom compost only and huge yields can be achieved this way. For gardens or farms, it can be spread in a 5cm thick layer or incorporated into the top 10-30cm of soil to conserve water, provide slow release nutrition and increase resistance to heat/erosion/wind. It is rich in nitrogen and known to be particularly effective at increasing orchard yields through the restoration of mycorrhizae. Much more information can be found online about the applications and benefits of mushroom compost.

Questions about your block? The best way to contact us is via Instagram or Facebook messages. You can find alternate contacts and learn more on our website: [skipworthmushrooms.au](http://skipworthmushrooms.au)