

Garden Cincinnati!

GARDENING ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE

My First Homegrown Mushroom!

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I just returned from a summer's end trip to the beach a week ago. It's always "interesting" coming home after being away for several days – you never quite know what you may find upon your return: dead plants, leaking pipes, "cat"astrophes. This time I was greeted by a very pleasant surprise – a shiitake mushroom growing on my mushroom log! As I made the rounds watering what's left of my garden this summer, I stopped at the section of log that I located under a mulberry tree and, low and behold, a mushroom had sprouted from it! It was of pretty decent size – about two inches in diameter. It had been there for a couple of days, most likely, because it was a little dry and hard to the touch – but still it was my first mushroom!



a mushroom is born!

Last fall I participated in a class taught by Wes Duren, of *Marvin's Organic Gardens*, where we took segments of oak logs and inoculated them with shiitake mushroom spores that we got from a supply company called *Fungi Perfecti*. For large scale commercial mushroom production, you would take several 4-6 foot length logs and stack them one on the other, or lean them up against other trees in the forest. For the purposes of the demonstration, we each received about a 1.5 foot long log, so it's just this cute little thing in the shade that could easily be overlooked – but just as I had given up on it because of the drought we've been experiencing this summer (and the logs need moisture for the fungus to colonize it and produce their fruiting bodies, a.k.a. mushrooms), it rewarded my patience with a little gem of fungal deliciousness. I can't wait to see if the other folks from the class have had a similar experience – and for the next flush that, hopefully, comes with our fall rains!

-Cara Hague, Horticulturist