

Misunderstood Mushrooms!

Frequently Asked Questions

How much do you really know about mushrooms? Some know a lot, others a little, and even more have no idea. We are going to clear up some misunderstandings about mushrooms. From mushroom growing to nutrient value, we have all the answers to your mushroom questions.



Q: Who grows mushrooms in Canada?

A: Mushrooms are grown from coast-to-coast in Canada. They are grown on mushroom farms, not picked in the wild so they are all safe to eat. Over 50% of mushroom production is in Ontario, 35% in British Columbia, 10% on the Prairies and 5% in Quebec and the Maritimes. There are over 200 million pounds (91,000 tonnes) of mushrooms grown in Canada annually. Most are sold fresh and some are canned. Canada exports over 80 million lb. (36,300 tonnes) of fresh mushrooms to the USA and imports 45 million lb. (20,600 tonnes) of canned or processed mushrooms, mostly from China. Per capita consumption of fresh mushrooms in Canada is approximately 3.5 lb. (1.6 kg.).

Q: Are mushrooms really grown on manure?

A: Not really! Mushrooms are grown on a pasteurized substrate that contains a source of nitrogen and carbon. The carbon comes from wheat straw or hay. The nitrogen comes from poultry litter and stable bedding plus high protein supplements such as soybean meal and feather meal. When the carbon and nitrogen sources are mixed with gypsum (to manage the pH) and water, a nutritionally-balanced growing medium for mushrooms is created. During that process, intense heat is generated (160°F / 71°C) that destroys any pests and pathogens. The substrate is then pasteurized to guarantee that no bacteria or micro-organisms remain in the substrate before the spawn (fungal seed) is added. Simply stated, mushrooms grow in 'clean dirt'.

Q: Why are mushrooms grown in the dark?

A: Mushrooms are grown in the dark because they don't need light. Mushrooms do not have chlorophyll, do not perform photosynthesis, and so do not need light. However, most modern mushroom growing rooms are well lit, for the safety of the workers.

Q: What kinds of mushrooms are grown in Canada?

A: The most popular mushroom in Canada is the White Button (*Agaricus bisporus*), followed by Brown (Crimini) and Portabellas. Specialty mushrooms, such as Shiitake, Oyster, King Oyster, and Enoki are gaining in popularity. Specialty mushrooms are grown in bottles, on wood logs or containers filled with sawdust. These specialty mushrooms are never picked out of the wild.

Q: Do mushrooms have any nutrient value?

A: Absolutely! Besides being tasty, mushrooms are low in fat and carbohydrates, have no cholesterol and are a good source of vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants. Furthermore, mushrooms are grown without additives. Canadian mushroom growers are proud to provide a FRESH, SIMPLE and GOOD food.

Q. Where can I learn more about mushrooms?

A. Visit www.mushrooms.ca for more information about Canadian mushrooms.