Want to grow your own mushrooms? With a few materials, the right amount of shade, some water and some patience, it’s marvelously easy.

1. Purchase mushroom plug spawn from a reputable spawn provider such as Easygrow Mushrooms and Composting LLC (easygrowmushrooms.com). The plug spawn are small wooden dowels colonized with mushroom-producing fungi.

2. Obtain logs from disease-free hardwood trees such as oak, maple or elm. Ideal log size is 4–6 inches in diameter and 3–4 feet long. Most softwoods are not desirable because they possess antifungal chemicals. Logs are best harvested between late fall and early spring, when the sugar content of the logs is the highest.

3. Drill holes the same size (¼") as the plugs. Holes should be arranged in a diamond pattern, 4–6 inches apart down the length of the log, and 1½–2 inches apart between rows. Hammer the plugs into the holes.

4. Melt cheese wax in a pan and use it to seal the holes. This provides a protective barrier that helps retain moisture and prevents other organisms from colonizing the logs.

5. When the holes are filled and sealed, stack your logs into a log-cabin type arrangement called a rick. Make sure you choose a place that is well-shaded and, if possible, in an area of high humidity. Place the logs at the bottom on bricks or stones so they don’t get contaminated by being in contact with the soil.

6. Cover the logs with shadecloth and wait. Prolonged dry spells will kill the mushroom culture, so water the logs as needed to keep them moist. Maintaining proper moisture is the most critical component of successful mushroom cultivation.

7. After 6 to 18 months, depending on the species, you can trigger the mushrooms to “fruit” by submerging your logs in water for 24 to 48 hours. One log should yield 2½ to 4 pounds of mushrooms over an average fruiting lifespan of 3 to 4 years.

8. Explore the world of culinary delight with fresh, organically grown mushrooms!