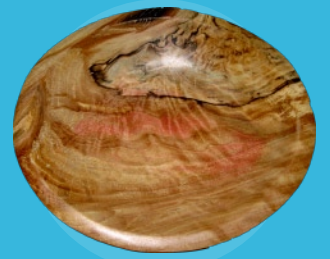


DIY Spalting Part II - Growth



Part 2 of 3

Growing fungi on your media

Now that you have your sterile media, it's time to get your fungi growing. Fungi are available for purchase online from culture collections and are shipped to you in **culture** form (see part I of this series) rather than mushroom form. Some fungi are restricted for shipping, requiring you to get various permits from your federal government. You'll save yourself a lot of money and time if you collect your own fungi. Most of the good spalting fungi have **fruiting bodies** ('mushrooms') that you can pick.

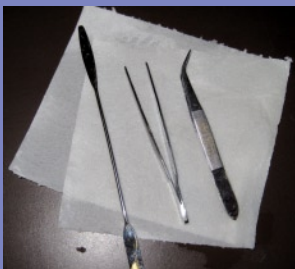
If you're serious about getting exactly the right fungus for precision spalting, you'll want to order the culture from a reputable source, such as ATCC (American Type Culture Collection) or a local university. Be prepared - cultures can easily run \$100 or more!

For DIY guides to making media (fungus food) and inoculating wood (putting the fungus on the wood), check out parts I and III of this series.

What You Need

As mentioned above, you need either a mushroom, piece of heavily spalted wood, or a culture. I'd advise against the wood simply because you really have no way of knowing what fungus you are pulling out of it. With a mushroom or purchased culture, you get 95% accuracy (that other 5% is user error).

You'll also need your media from part I, some isopropyl alcohol (the highest concentration you can find, available in the first aid section of most box stores), white paper towels, tweezers, and a small spatula.



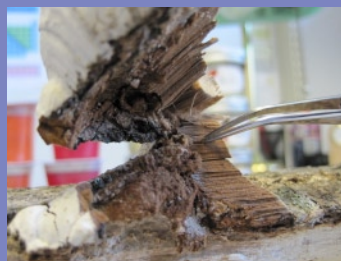
Cleaning up

Step 1: Clear off a large plastic surface (counter, desk) in a room with a door that can be shut. Make sure you are the only one in the room - you want to minimize air movement.

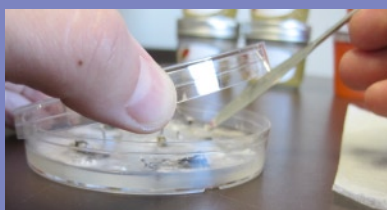
Step 2: Spray your hands with alcohol and be sure you are wearing short sleeves and that your hair is tied back. Thoroughly spray the surface with the alcohol. Lay out a paper towel and saturate it with alcohol. Spray every surface of the tools with alcohol, then lay them out on the paper towel. The idea here is to keep the area clean so that you only put your fungus on the media. Just make sure the tools are dry before use.

Inoculation

FOR MUSHROOMS - Be sure the mushroom is moist (this means it is still 'alive'). Rip the mushroom in half. Using sterile tweezers, grab some flesh from the inside. Place that flesh into your media. Don't put it in deep, and make sure part remains above the surface.



FOR CULTURES - using a sterile spatula, gently scrape some of the fungus from the plate until you have a residue on your spatula. Place the residue on the surface of your media.



FOR WOOD - break apart the wood to expose a fresh surface that has not been in contact with air. For denser woods, you can use a sterilized chisel. Using sterile tweezers, pull some wood fiber from the fresh surface and stick it to your media so that part is below, and part is above the surface.



After placement of the fungus, screw the lid back on, but make sure it isn't tight (fungi need air). Place the jars in a dark, warm place (a drawer in your kitchen with nothing else in it would work perfectly).

Resist the urge to check on your fungus by removing the lid. This potentially lets other fungi in!

Final Notes

- Make sure to only open lids enough to get your tools inside. The less exposure to air, the less chance of contamination from airborne molds.
- Sterilize your hands after every time you touch something that isn't sterile, like wood, the mushroom, your face, etc. Sterilize tools if you change to a different fungus.
- Most fungi will have colonized the media after 7-10 days. At this point, you can use the media to inoculate your wood (see part 3). If you plan on storing the fungus, let it grow for a month in the dark. After a month, put parafilm around the loose lid and stick the jar in your refrigerator. The fungus will keep for a year.
- Green is bad! If you see something green on your media, you have an unwelcome guest. Toss the jar, and start over.
- One fungus per jar, please. You don't want a fungus war on your hands.