

Oyster mushroom-A viable indigenous food source for rural masses

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■ **Abstract** : Oyster mushroom cultivation is an economically viable process for conversion of various ligno-cellulosic wastes into valuable food. It can be artificially cultivated on various agro-residues, viz., cotton stalks, wheat and rice straw etc. The yield of mushroom varies with the substrate used and it may be around 500 g/kg of raw material. Mushrooms are highly nutritious, environment friendly crops and have numerous benefits. They are a very good source of protein, vitamins and minerals. But the cultivation and adoption of oyster mushroom in India is very limited compare to other crop. This may be due to lack of awareness and appreciation as a food source, monotonous traditional diets and the conservative eating habit of people. The present work aimed to study on various oyster mushroom cultivation techniques, their storage and processing methods and substrates used in the production of *Pleurotus* spp., for oyster mushroom cultivation. Experiments were conducted at GTC, ICAR-CIRCOT, Nagpur for cultivation of oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus florida* and *Pleurotus ostreatus*) using cotton stalks. The results showed 300 g of fresh oyster mushroom could harvest from one kg of dry cotton stalks. The cropping period for cultivation of oyster mushroom in cotton stalks was thirty days. The implication of this study is to facilitate technology adoption of oyster mushroom cultivation using cotton stalks and thereby identify the feasibility of mushroom cultivation in the study area for the betterment of the life of the local community.

■ **Key words** : Oyster mushroom, Rural masses, Spawn quality

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