

[MUSIC] Hey Wyoming, welcome to the Lawn and Garden Podcast with the University Extension Specialist Jeff Edwards and his co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington, join Jeff, Jerry, and all of their special guests as they talk all things Wyoming garden from plant variants to weather events, to pesticides, and the power needles. Our Lawn and Garden Podcast helps you improve your home garden and in small acreage. Good day and happy gardening.

[MUSIC] Hey, good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards at the KGO- KE- K- excuse me KERM Lawn and Garden Program. Happy to be here today. [MUSIC] Ben if you can give us thumbs up. Can you- can you, yeah. Great. Perfect.

[inaudible 00:00:57]

Yeah. We're- we're- we're having some technical issues this morning, but we'll get it worked out.

Not anymore. [LAUGHTER]

All right. We're here. Okay. This is Jeff Edwards for the KERM Lawn and Garden program. Good morning, Jerry. Good to see you.

Good morning, Jeff. And you know we're live.

We are live. [LAUGHTER] It's pretty obvious today. Jerry Ersch- Erschabeck, co-host for the KERM Lawn and Garden Program. It's a beautiful day in Goshen County.

My gosh it certainly is.

Can- can't ask for anything better. Uh, our guest today is Ben from Fungus Among Us. And Ben, uh, I forgot to ask you. I don't have your last name.

Fournier

Oh, okay, Fournier?

Yes.

All right. Awesome. Excellent. Uh, well, we- we're glad that you're here, but before we dive into the program, we're going to take a few minutes and listen to our sponsors.

[MUSIC] Starting a garden? The University of Wyoming Extension has you covered. See our publication, Wyoming Vegetable and Fruit Growing Guide. To learn more about growing fruits and vegetables in Wyoming, visit the Wyoming Extension website at uwo.edu/uwe.

Did you know there are free online education courses on the University of Wyoming Extension website? We offer an animal science course for- for each student, a state planning and information on taxes and fad diets, plus much more. If we haven't covered a topic you're interested in, contact your local extension office for help. Our

course list is growing throughout the year. Head to wyoextension.org and scroll to the online course catalog. While you're there, check out our Facebook feed or watch our extensive collection of from the ground up videos for seasonal gardening tips. Looking for the best way to keep up with all the news from University of Wyoming Extension, the College of Agriculture and Wyoming Ag Experiment Stations? The uwuagnews.com website features real-time education, research and extension events, and feature stories from across the state. Bookmark uwuagnews.com today and subscribe to our monthly email newsletter, uwuagnews.com, growing people, knowledge, and communities.

All right. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KERM Lawn and Garden Program. Welcome back. And before we get into our guest, we already have a phone call, so let's go ahead and see what one of our listeners has to say. Hello, you're on the air.

I was wondering what the ground temperature was and when I can start putting my cucumber seeds on.

Jerry, do you happen to know what the ground temperature is?

I happen.

You haven't been paying attention?

No, it's- it's too early.

Too early to plant cucumbers?

I think so.

Okay. I would- so this is May 6th. Um, I would at least wait until the 15th.

Okay- okay.

Unless you're growing in an enclosed space like a high tunnel-

No.

- house or geodesic dome. Uh, and then those- they could go in now. But, um, if you're outside, I would wait at least until the 15th.

Okay, what is the ideal temperature for stuff to germinate?

Um, it depends, things- different- uh, different plants have different germinating temperatures. Some things like spinach will germinate if a soil temperature of 40 degrees. Whereas things like cucumber probably need 55, maybe 60. So-

Okay.

-uh, if you can wait a little bit longer, that would be great.

Okay. Thank you.

You're welcome. Have a good day. Thanks for the call. All right so Ben, can you hear us just checking again?

Yes, I can.

Okay. Perfect. All right. So, uh, once again, Ben Fournier from, uh, Fungus Among Us. He is in Casper. And, um- uh, I guess right off the bat, I- I want to ask you, are you a mycologist?

I'm not. Um, by education, I am an environmental scientist.

Oh okay. All right. So what- what- what got you involved in wanting to grow mushrooms?

So I moved out to Wyoming from Oregon in 2016.

Oh, that was probably- that was probably a change for you.

It was- it was. [LAUGHTER] Especially Oregon, there's a lot of mushrooms that grow year-round everywhere.

Sure. [LAUGHTER]

It's a- it's a big deal out there. And I moved out here and there's almost no mushrooms. It's like a month and a half where you can go out to pick wild mushrooms and even then it's pretty hit or miss.

So you have to forage quickly.

You do, you have about two days when they start popping up, depending on which ones you want before they dry out and turn to leather.

Perfect. Yeah. So Oregon to Wyoming, and then, um- uh, you- when did you start your business?

I started in 2018. Just kinda doing- I started small plan when I first moved here just for myself and I miss mushrooms and fresh- fresher foods. That's not always- the grocery store produce here is not the best in Wyoming.

Oh, come on it's the best we can get so it's-

It is- it is, it's good but, [LAUGHTER] and so it kinda spread out. Friends started wanting them so I started growing maybe £10 a week and selling some at farmers markets and giving them away and it kinda, it grew from there to the end of 2018, or it's growing about £30 a week.

You know, 10- £10 a week of mushrooms that's a lot.

[LAUGHTER] Yes. I mean, it's not just like you're, you know, part of ellos, the

creaminess, it's variety, lion's mane, which is a nice lobster substitute. King oysters which are big. They kinda look like a button mushroom but they- they taste like scallops, have kind of an almond taste. And then your Shiitake and oyster mushroom.

Oh, that's awesome. Any seafood substitute that we can have in the State of Wyoming that would be great. [LAUGHTER]

But they wouldn't be frozen.

Yeah, there's actually a funny story. I'm a local charity here, Wyoming Food for Thought that's, uh, a big charity event every year called [inaudible 00:07:26]. And their first year, we had signed on to do it, and I had made lobster pizza using lion's mane and then pride scallops, using the king oyster. We had two people during that time. They- people paid to come in and sample food to- they tried our food, came back over, they're very strict vegans and they were livid [LAUGHTER] that we gave them lobster.

You- you snag lobster under my meal?

Yeah and so I had to go explain [LAUGHTER] that, you know, it wasn't lobster. And one of them is still a customer to this day, it's been four years since that happened.

Hey, that's-that's awesome. So the Food for Tho- Food for Thought folks, I've, uh, worked with them on multiple occasions. That's a really good, uh, um, group of folks that provide food for and- and different opportunities for folks in Casper, but that's great. Now that's awesome. I think Jerry, did you have some questions?

Yeah. So the- the mushroom itself, that's like the flower of the fungi; is that true?

Um, it's more like- yeah, I guess you can compare it to the flower. It's the- the most, most of the fungi that- that you see is maybe two percent of the actual organism. So that- that mushroom is its fruiting body at the bottom, you know, they have those gills that drop fours and stuff. Your typical mushroom and they can have other types of fungi that their fruiting body is mostly just, uh, an appendage with a very small amount that's actually what you'd compare to a flower on a planet.

Now you're getting really close to talking about the mycelium right?

Yes- yeah.

Yeah. [LAUGHTER] The mycelium.

Jerry- Jerry has studied up. [LAUGHTER]

I meant for [OVERLAPPING]

You're too silly about mushrooms. So this mycelium, if I'm not mistaken, is like a superhighway to communicate with all the other trees, right?

Oh, yes. It's -

And-

So- so it depends on the type of mushrooms. Some mushrooms are decomposers. Some mushrooms are secondary and tertiary decomposers, which means they decompose stuff that other mushrooms decompose. And then you have the very interesting class of fungus they're very specialized and are called rhizomorphic. And those are the ones that connect to roots of plants, roots to trees within different species. And from those roots they take different sugars and carbohydrates. And in return, they give those trees sugars and carbs that they break down. They give them antiviral substances, antibiotic substances, and then can actually connect tree roots that are up to 50, 60 miles away. And if there's a forest fire on point A, that current, kinda like brain neurons that goes through that fungus can tell the tree 60 miles away, tree B, that tree A is on fire and to start dropping needles or thickening it's bark or gaining more water.

Wow.

So it's a real fascinating and kinda connection.

So, uh, isn't the largest organism in the world considered to be a fungal, er, mycelium?

Patch.

It is by area.

By area, yeah.

It- and it's an organ, it's a honey mushroom, amarilla. It's been dying off due to climate change, wildfires, drought, human impacts but I believe it's still about 10,000 square miles.

Wow. That's- that's huge.

It's all one organism, so if you pick mushrooms 60 miles away from another point, you're still picking mushrooms from the same organism in which mushrooms clone themselves and they also reproduce sexually through those spores, but they also clones what is the same organism. It's- it's fascinating how they- they work.

That is very cool.

So the mushroom that we've- we commonly see that's on the stump of a tree, we should not eat that, right?

Well, wait a minute. Are you talking about shelf fungus or are you talking about a typical mushroom type looking organism?

I'm talking about the tree that died. You cut down and then two or three layers- two

or three years later, you'd have these mushrooms coming up and they're- they're helping the tree decay, correct?

You know, that's- that's a really difficult question for him to ask- or to answer because there are good ones and bad ones, right?

Okay.

You really got to know what you're doing [OVERLAPPING] when you are harvesting mushrooms out in the wild. [LAUGHTER]

You do- you do. This year we're going to be offering a foraging class just locally to help people figure out what's what because there's some that are really easy to identify, like oyster mushrooms. They look like a little shelf, in a lot of times they- they are, kind of a first-generation decomposer. And they grow on dead cottonwoods, lot of dead poplars, any dead hardwood honestly from Aspen to Hickory. Um, and those are very earth choice edible, then you have others, some people see them after you cut down a tree or if a tree is dying. They're nice little pretty mushrooms and after two or three days they turn to black goo. [LAUGHTER] Those are the kind of grouping called the inky caps. A lot of them are edible, but they contain chemicals in them similar to [inaudible 00:13:09] like what they give alcoholics, they don't keep drinking and if you eat them and then drink any beer with it or any type of alcohol, within two, three days you get violently ill. [OVERLAPPING] [LAUGHTER] You know, they're edible but if you want to have a beer with them you're going to have a really, really bad time.

Wow. So Jerry I think I have some of those inky cap things growing in my landscaping and so, you know, for a good time. [OVERLAPPING]

For a good time calls, yeah. [LAUGHTER] Two or three days later.

Yeah, up to two or three days later, that's awesome.

So the morels, uh, that's part of your foraging education as well?

Yes, it is. Um, it's difficult to work them out here in Wyoming because the only morels you really see in Wyoming are post wildfires, so this year I will be going up to the snow east where some of the bigger wildfires for this year in Wyoming and foraging for morels up there. A couple of years ago we did the Jefferson burn in Bondurant, the outside of Bondurant.

Okay.

And we picked about 40 pounds of mushrooms of morels in two days from that. It's- they- they love the wildfires around here.

So- so morels, have you- have you heard morels Gerald?

I have not.

You look at them and you think, I'm not going to eat that. [LAUGHTER] But when they're prepared correctly, they're really, really good.

So little butter, little garlic.

Uh, but you got to wash them first. That's the number one thing. But yeah. [OVERLAPPING]

Wash them.

Wash them. But at least in my book, how would you fix them, Ben?

Oh, the- the best way is a little bit of bu-butter, a little bit of garlic, a little bit of salt, and just cook them up until they're a little tender. You want to make sure they're cooked pretty well because they do contain- in fact all of the- the species in the morchella and the fascias which they are very closely related families, contain a chemical that's used in rocket fuel, hydrazine.

Awesome.

If you don't cook them well [LAUGHTER] you'll get poisoned from that and it's broken down by your liver and to even nastier things [LAUGHTER] they are filtered out through your kidneys and it can cut up your kidney. So all the morels, all true morels you have to cook very well, but when you do there, I mean, they're the one of the best you can get.

It's kinda like a puffer fish. [LAUGHTER] Go ahead, Gerald.

Now Jeff- Jeff indicated that he would wash his but a lot of mushrooms you just brush.

Yes.

Wash?

Honestly when it comes to wild mushrooms you can brush them off, but sitting in the wild you're going to have bugs to get to, different types of gnats that are attracted just to fungi. You can brush them off. You might have a little dirt left, but your big issue is you're probably going to have bugs in there.

Um, proteins.

So what I always recommend to people is sook them in cold water with about a tablespoon of salt for every gallon of water. About 20 minutes, all the bugs will come out, what's left will be dead, so it won't be squirming out as your cooking them [LAUGHTER] like living spaghetti [LAUGHTER] and after that you're- you're good to go.

When- when you asked Ben to be on the show, I knew that this was going to be an entertaining program, Jerry.

So of course, I've also seen something about morels. It's when the look for morels when the dogwood is in bloom. Is there any truth to that?

Around here, like back East and the Midwest, that's a really good rule of thumb. Around here because our weather is so crazy that time a year right now and like Michigan or Minnesota, they're harvesting morels. No one in Wyoming is going to see morels for about another month. But what I go by here is that you want after all the snow melts on the forest floor, you want to wait a week until usually the first rain comes from the sixth of June, that's real heavy after snow melts, higher elevations. After that rain, wait until the first 65-70 degree day and they'll start popping up. [OVERLAPPING] So it's- it's kind of a, there's a whole kind of chart of when to pick them. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

And it's different in Oregon, isn't it? [LAUGHTER]

[LAUGHTER] It's kind of like witchcraft here in Wyoming you have to, [LAUGHTER] you know, wait for the first moon and the second wind, and you know. [OVERLAPPING]

That's right up- that's just right up- that's right up Jerry's ally. So Ben you mentioned you're going to have a workshop. Can you explain more about that? And I'm guessing you might recruit a few people from Goshen County if you share that information.

Awesome. Yes. We- well, we have one that we'll be doing at Casper College. That's just teaching basic how to grow your own mushrooms at home. I will be offering like to teach, grow kits. People can choose from a couple of different types of mushrooms, that they want to grow. And then in June, probably around the 14th or 15th, we'll be offering a foraging course here in Casper, up on Casper Mountain where we'll pick the leaks, porcini mushrooms and [inaudible 00:18:38] are very tasty mushrooms, honey mushrooms, rosellas, which there's a few tasty ones in there, one's called the chicken mushroom, one's called the shrimp mushroom because they taste like their namesake. [LAUGHTER] And then some morels up there in past few years we've found some and then some medicinal mushrooms such as, reishi the Ganodermas, which are the mushroom of life in Chinese medicine.

Interesting. Very cool. So questions, Jerry?

Yeah. We always knew that mushrooms were- were- were quite nutritious. I didn't realize that they were that many medicinal and what are you treating with those medicinal mushrooms?

So a lot of mushrooms have antivirals, anti-inflammatories, antibacterials just because they've had to evolve to compete with different, you know, [LAUGHTER] competitors in nature. And so with that you can extract them, make tinctures or just dry them out and eat them, and get those benefits. There's other mushrooms, like oyster mushrooms and shiitake that contain statins- natural statins that help to

lower blood pressure. That's in Chinese medicine again, that's still commonly prescribed by doctors in China are dried shiitake and oyster supplements to lower blood pressure instead of just going to, you know, leave a statin, or the- the prescription blood flow- for blood pressure medication.

And- and are those- oh, I'm sorry. Are those traditionally dried and then rehydrated as a tea or how are they- how are they used?

The shiitake are dried, used as a tea. There are also extracted in alcohol and then that alcohol is let to like evaporate down. So you get a tincture and it's still kind of a thick liquid, you drop it under your tongue, you can add it to food, but it has all of those compounds within that mushroom just very concentrated.

Uh, interesting. Wow. Good stuff.

Now, the growing conditions for mushrooms out in the wild, I mean, you have everything blown into wind, insects all over. But when you're trying to grow, like even indoors, doesn't your substrate have to be sterile?

Yes, it does, for most mushrooms. The oysters, excuse me, oyster mushrooms, which again are those you buy in the stores, they look kind of like a shelf. They always come in like a- a package. Almost all the stores anymore have the oyster mushrooms in your- your mushroom section and produce. They like to actually eat a small kind of worm-like animal called a nematode. And so as they carry through their substrate, if it doesn't have those nematodes, you're not going to have them fruit as well. So instead of sterilizing they- they grow on straw and cardboard. We grow all of our mushrooms on 40 percent cardboard, and then there are other given substrate. But if you were to sterilize that they wouldn't have all the nutrition, they wouldn't fruit as well. So we just pasteurize it at 161 degrees for an hour and it leaves those nematodes alive to kind of keep colonizing and breaking down that straw and eating some of the other bacteria. And then there's the oyster mushroom mycelium colonizes that. It captures and eats those nematodes and gives it some extra oomph to the fruit out.

Wow, that's uh- I'm- I'm like speechless. That's totally cool. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

Yeah. And then other ones we do have to sterilize because we enhanced- we grow everything like I said, on cardboard and then most of the mushrooms runs sawdust- hardwoods sawdust. And that has to be sterilized because we throw in four percent, we brand five percent- we brand depending on the type of mushroom we're growing. And if it's not sterile, you're going to have fermenting bacteria, yeast, um, and different types of molds that want to colonize that and they can colonize it quicker than the fungus can.

Very interesting. Hey, er, let's take a break and listen to our sponsors and we'll be back- right back after this. So see you in a little bit, Ben.

Okay. See you soon.

[MUSIC] Is that time folks, as the snow melts and the sun breaks, the University of Wyoming Extension has many upcoming virtual and hybrid learning programs available to you. Listen each week, for details on new events, and how to make your garden flourish.

This summer Wyoming first lady Janie Gordon, Wyoming Hunger Initiative cause it's a nutrition program, and the University of Wyoming Extension, we invite you to join us in growing a little extra to donate fresh produce to local anti-hunger organizations to support our neighbors facing food insecurity. Stop by your local extension office to pick up your free seeds or donate extra from your garden harvest. For more information, visit www.nohungerwyo.org/grow, W-W-W dot N-O-H-U-N-G-E-R-W-Y-O dot ORG slash G-R-O-W.

Curious about thistles, the University of Wyoming Extension has recovered. See our publication, Wyoming, thistle guide, native and non-native. Learn more at youwyo.edu/uwe.

Now back to the Learning Garden podcast.

All right, we're back. Hey, this is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KERM Learning Garden Program. Happy that you're here with us today. Our guest today is Ben Von A from Fungus Among Us. And uh I think you need to unmute him. Oh, he unmuted himself. He's good, he's good. Excellent um, so, uh, again, you know, this is new technology. Uh, this is our second program for the year. We're trying to do a little bit at Zoom and uh live call and stuff and uh it- it's just kind of been a little bit of a challenge, not for Jerry so much. He just gets to sit here [LAUGHTER].

But yeah. It is a challenge. [LAUGHTER] Telling you [NOISE] live- live radio is [OVERLAPPING].

Live anything, what are you talking about?

You live anything. Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

So Ben, mushrooms that you've- you said you had a whole bunch of morals, 80 pounds of it. Uh, if you don't sell right away or get rid of them right away, how do you preserve them?

So we definitely get rid of them right away. We have probably about a 100-pound waitlist right now. Uh, [OVERLAPPING]

I'm sorry, what does that mean?

If you were to harvest them [LAUGHTER]

So he has a- he has a waitlist of people awaiting mushrooms, so he doesn't have any problems selling what he has. [LAUGHTER]

I heard that he lift.

We recommend- we actually- we get people anymore from all over the country sending messages to us asking us questions. And the other day we had a lady in Oregon send us a message that she had all these bowels to dry and porcine mushrooms. So what I recommend and it's super easy you can go to like a dollar tree, or dollar store, Walmart, and get the wire dish racks. Like it kind of looks like a grill that, you know, you put your dishes on, has little legs on it. Sit that up somewhere that has nice airflow, put your mushrooms on it, wait three or four days, turn them over, wait a couple more days, and in Wyoming they are dry. Sorry, area here is so dry [LAUGHTER]. So I'd say it's really nothing technical for you, you just leave them out on a- on a rack or rail or dish rack somewhere. And then when you're done with that, just throw them in a baggie like a ziplock baggie, works fine. I recommend also going to a craft store. Again, Walmart, uh, pretty much any local craft store has them but desk and hit packs like you get boxes of shoes, it's do not hit.

Oh yeah.

Throw a couple of those in there. It'll absorb any leftover moisture from those mushrooms and they'll stay for a year or year-and-a-half.

Wow.

So do they freeze well or because of the water moisture in content, they don't freeze well.

They don't freeze. They will, uh, reconstitute to a pile of mush.

Nice.

Pretty much any mushroom there, they're about [LAUGHTER] 90, 92 percent water. So if you try and freeze them, you burst those cell walls, you pull it out and it's just essentially just shredded itself to a pile of mush once set.

Right.

It's- it's a bag of goo. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah. [LAUGHTER] Right from the Morel Gou, I don't know good.

So um, when you uh dry them and wish to reuse them, uh how's the best way to do that? Do you rehydrate them?

Yeah. Rehydrate. You add some water about 160, 180 degrees not boiling. Uh, put your mushrooms in there, usually about uh, I think I do about 2.5 to three cups of water for every ounce and a half of dried mushrooms, which is equal to about a pound of fresh mushrooms cause of that 90 percent water content. Uh and let them sit for about 20-30 minutes and just cut them up and use them as normal. Uh, good rule of thumb is to save that soaked water because it-it's mushroom broth now, it's

mushroom stock. You can use it in soup just as you would use like chicken stock or chicken broth and chilly. Pretty much anything that you use stock and you can substitute with that leftover soaked water from your mushrooms.

Hey, and if it tastes like lobster, that's a benefit.

It is. [LAUGHTER]

I saw this kid one-time eating lobster and he was having chunks, and I'm like gosh, why waste lobster on somebody like that. [LAUGHTER] So the lobster mushrooms, uh they really taste like lobster.

They do, all you have to do is cook them in a little bit of garlic and butter and it's- and there's-there's different- so there is a type of wild mushrooms also called the lobster mushroom. It's a reseller, which is a big- you see, I'm sure everyone listening and you guys have all seen them. They pop up in the spring and fall. They have bright red candy red caps, about 2-3 inches in diameter. Uh, sometimes they can get 7-8 inches in diameter. And there's a type of fungus that will colonize that as parasitic fungus called hypomyces, and it turns them kind of a- almost blush pink. And it's a choice fungus once that colonizes it because that parasitic fungus has actually turned that entire mushroom to itself, the hypomyces, and that tastes exactly like lobster as well and that's called a lobster mushroom. And so there's a variety of mushrooms that actually tastes like lobster when you- when you cook them up.

I uh, I was always under the impression if it's bright red in the forest, you stay away from it. [LAUGHTER]

That's- that's true for most things, but when it comes to mushrooms, they're- they're the [inaudible 00:30:16] Um, I can't- there's a couple of red mushrooms like, uh, everyone's kinda- the- the- your typical toadstool that's white with the red spots on it or red with white spots, uh, Amanita muscaria. And it won't kill you, but you will- reindeer and herders [LAUGHTER] in Eastern Europe eat it, uh, and that's how Santa Claus came about. They- they- they see flying reindeer [inaudible 00:30:43] [LAUGHTER] if you catch my drift.

Let's see. Uh, another fun thing to do, Jerry. [LAUGHTER] Uh, [NOISE] interesting. Um, so Ben, how do we, uh, how do our listeners get in touch with you if they'd like to participate in your workshop or- or chat with you more about, um, fungi or- or those types of things?

So we have, uh, a website. It's- oh no, what is our website? Um, funguamongwy, like fungus among us, funguamongwy.com. We also have a Facebook page, and that's the best place if you just want to reach out, chat, have any questions about mushrooms you found. We do mushroom identification. If you wanted to send us a picture of, you know, something cool, something funny that you found, your dog ate, you want to eat, uh, [LAUGHTER] and you can find us there at Wyfungi. Just type that into Facebook or type fungus among us into Facebook, they'll both bring you to

our page.

Okay. All right. And, um, er, details there for, uh, you said you have kits available.

Yes. We do on our website, um, also we have people that reach out to us on Facebook. Uh, we have kits for shiitake, king oyster mushrooms, Lion's Mane, and Italian oysters. And here soon will be- we compost all of our leftover material substrate and we'll also, probably in the next 2, 3 months, be offering that organic mushroom compost as well.

Oh, awesome. Okay. Uh, So can, um, any- can anybody grow mushrooms?

Anybody can, especially with our kit, they're- they're pretty foolproof. [LAUGHTER] Um, there's some that are harder. If it's your first go around, I wouldn't recommend trying Lion's Mane, it's a very picky mushroom. Uh, right now we have about 25 people who've bought Lion's Mane and I'm in daily contact with 15 of them a month later, making sure that they're guiding them every day step-by-step. But our King Oysters, you can just let it sit in your basement, forget about it, and you'll have mushrooms in a week. Same thing with the shiitake.

So in your kits, if you have mushrooms in a week, how long can you harvest out of them?

So you can get 2-3 harvests, uh, more if you've kinda had some experience and figure out how it works, but right off the bat, just buying, say, shiitake, you're trying it your first time, you'll get two harvests. Um, your first harvest probably be close to a pound. Your second harvest will be about half a pound to a pound depending on, you know, how skilled and how lucky you are your first time around.

[LAUGHTER] So- so if I know absolutely nothing about growing mushrooms, I can call, you have one in your kits, and within a week have- have mushrooms is what you're saying.

Yes. Correct. Uh, we-

[OVERLAPPING] Wow, tha- that sounds like an awesome deal. What do you think about that, Jerry?

I consider really fascinating.

[LAUGHTER]

You know, the- the fact that, you know, the only mushrooms that we've ever been in contact with, are, again, the- the dead tree, and whatever is- is locally offered at our grocery stores, which is, you know, portobellos and the white button.

White cap- button cap. Yeah. [OVERLAPPING]

White button cap mushrooms. And-

Yeah. And that's- we're- we're trying to change that too because most of those mushrooms come from the East Coast. They're shipped 2,000 miles over here-

Wow- wow- wow.

-to land in your local grocery store. There aren't really many large commercial mushroom farms supplying grocery stores. So even those mushrooms are four or five days old once they arrive at the store.

So when you're- when you're looking at mushrooms in the grocery store, uh, what would be- so I'm sure you've not done this in a long time, but what would be your criteria for not selecting and packaging of mushrooms in the grocery store?

[LAUGHTER]

So if you're- you're looking like your buttons and portobellos, you don't want it to smell fishy, you don't want it to look slimy, and there's a- mushrooms get lights as well, um, and different bacterial infections. There's one, it's called slime rot. It's really gross and you'll start seeing little pits on the caps of packaged like portobello mushrooms.

Okay.

And they'll just look like little brown or gray globs of like goo in these pits. That mushroom is not good. [LAUGHTER] Um, and because of- of COVID, things being closed, the workforce that's harvested mushrooms has shift to less inexperienced and different quicker ways of production, and there's a lot more bad mushrooms that are making it past the selection process into the grocery store.

Ah, very interesting. So, uh, your comments about the, uh, mushrooms being produced on the East Coast, uh, I- I- I had a meeting I had to go to in Pennsylvania and part of that was, uh, touring mushroom grow facilities, which was absolutely fascinating, um, uh, and they were producing some of the ones that you were talking about. I think particularly I remember them talking about Lion's Mane. But, uh, these- these were large scale, um, uh, many acres worth of rooms and stuff that, uh, uh, it was- it was, um, quite educational. [LAUGHTER]

Oh yeah. Yeah. Some of those farms do upwards of a million pounds a week, which is unfathomable. It's- [LAUGHTER]

So, uh, uh, would you have any idea how many pounds a week a person can harvest if they had unlimited mushrooms?

Uh, you- like- like kits or like growing- like what do you?

Yeah, so, uh, I guess what I'm thinking about is the commercial scale. An average person, how many pounds do they package?

Oh, um, oh, I can't remember the statistics on it, but it's- I think it's- the average American eats like 0.75 pounds of mushrooms a week is what it equates to

throughout our population of 300 to five million now. [LAUGHTER]

I'm guessing that it's not a lot of people in Wyoming since it's limited access.
[LAUGHTER]

Yeah, [LAUGHTER] or trying to change that. [LAUGHTER]

So, again, Ben, when you're growing at home, a basement, cooler area, a closet.

Humid?

Yeah. It- it depends on the type of mushroom you're growing. Um, ours is coming little grow bags that are pretty much all together. Um, they have different temperature. For the most part, it's about the same from 60-65 degrees. Uh, it doesn't matter. A lot of people think mushrooms like the dark. They actually like to fully mature. And so somewhere it gets a little bit of light, not a ton. Uh, just kinda set them to the side. You need to mist them a couple of times a day. Doesn't have to be humid, but you need to make sure that they aren't drying out.

Does- so, uh, it doesn't need to be UV light, it's just some sort of light.

Exactly. It could be, er, a light from a light bulb, a little bit of sunlight coming in.

So I've got a crawl space under my house. It's about 55 degrees.

But is it easy to access?

Uh, sort of.

Sort of? [LAUGHTER]

[LAUGHTER] The bottom of the clauses seems more plausible.

Yeah. I guess not if I'm trying to harvest hundreds of pounds of mushrooms out of it a week, but yeah, um, maybe worth to try.

Yeah. And lot- a lot of people like- kinda get into it as a hobby, you can buy little greenhouses there. It's like a 6'7" foot high shelf with the little part that goes over it. Um, and there's several people that I know, um, that by our kits so, you know, more experienced, they can make their own blocks and they'll just throw them in there with a little cool mist humidifier. They bought Home Depot on a timer and run that few times a day and grow their own, you know, four or £5 week like that.

How many hours of light do they need?

It again, it varies. Um, hours get about 10 11 hours of light a day and it's- it's light- it's filtered through there. They're in these grow houses and it's light, it's filtered through the tops of these greenhouses, so it's not that poll.

Okay.

Sunlight, it's maybe like dimmed 50 percent.

Okay. Very cool. Do you guys have questions?

No.

[LAUGHTER] Just che- just- just pulling the group in the studio here.

But it's just amazing. I mean, here you have- we folks from Wyoming that are not exposed to any kind of mushroom other than just a couple. And here you're talking about a whole fragrant bundle of mushrooms. I mean, it's just- it's just totally amazing.

Yeah. Yeah. I'm- I'm ready to uh.

To dive in.

Yeah.

[LAUGHTER] Dive into the mushroom growing.

[LAUGHTER]

Let me know. I'll send you guys some [inaudible 00:39:55] to try out. It's- because it's- you get sucked into it. It's fun to watch them grow and eat them [LAUGHTER].

So Ben, um, I think you know what we're going to- we're going to wrap up your segment. Jerry and I are going to spend some time talking about things going on in the county. [OVERLAPPING]

Okay.

You're welcome to hang on. But we appreciate you being here as a guest and filling our heads with mushrooms [LAUGHTER].

And feel welcome. I appreciate you guys inviting [inaudible 00:40:26] [OVERLAPPING] getting a chance to talk.

Okay. Great. Thank you for being with us.

Thanks Ben.

Thank you. Have a good day.

You too. So Jerry, your gardener What are you doing in your garden right now?

Well, we just got our onions planted Sunday, I believe it was.

Okay.

And really nice conditions and then it snowed on us. And so I love that because it was just one of those deals where perfect condition for planting on Sunday and, um,

you know, you gotta get those onions in it if you want to have any size of an onion.

How much moisture did you get this week?

You know, I don't really know.

Okay.

I don't.

Our- our rain gauge in our neighborhood was pretty consistent. An inch and a half, which yay.

Yay.

Fantastic.

It was a million-dollar rain snow.

Yeah.

System.

And I'm- I'm really glad that, um, there's news now about, uh, the different irrigation districts might be allowing a little more water coming through.

Yeah

Which, uh, is good news.

And, uh, GID is- is, uh, using that tunnel and I guess with two- two feet of free board at the top.

[LAUGHTER] That's awesome.

And so yeah. It's really awesome that way. We're getting water. We're- we're- we're- we're seeing some signs of greenery route or a county, guess it's just so pretty to see that hey, coming up and- and seeing green burrow pits.

We really need to be watching her fruit trees right now. Uh, I know that- what did we have a six-degree day or a nine degree day, you know, three weeks ago, something like that. I'm guessing that, uh, we might not have the fruit production that we have in the past just based on that, but who knows?

Yeah. And so you said you- we need to be watching what- is there anything we can do?

Uh, not a whole lot. Um, I- if your trees look dry, I would say water them- continue to water them.

So in- in Florida, this is big growers. They run a irrigation system when it gets like it's going to freeze on, immerse, that sort of thing. Would that be beneficial here?

Uh, you mean like sprinkling them to keep the fruit from freezing?

Yes.

Uh, it- it does work here. Yes. But that-, uh, for- I don't know- yeah, you could do that.

Yeah. I see that my apple tree is starting to bud out and just the very close signs of a bud coming. Uh, I think I told you a timer to before or maybe last week, our kids had a water leak and from the main to the house and had to dig up their yard. And in their yard was it's really nice apple tree and they'd had to take five or six limbs off. I looked at it the other day. It is looking gorgeous. [OVERLAPPING] [LAUGHTER] They didn't do- they don't like to trim. And this trimming I think really helped out. There'll probably be less fruit production like you had indicated, but by gosh, I think that it's gonna be really good.

Yeah. Yeah. So our first call this morning, she was asking about planting cucumbers.

Cucumbers.

And again, you know, our- our last frost-free date is usually [OVERLAPPING] May 15th,.

Fifteenth or.

Fifteenth 15th.

Okay.

And then so basically anytime after that, for those higher temperature crops, you can start putting them in.

Now cucumbers you can- you can also trellis cucumbers, they need a little help, but you can trellis cucumbers and they'll grow without having any dirt on them, or they wash right up and you can just grow them on the ground. But some people really like to trellis them.

I prefer to trellis some it's cleaner growing and you aren't taken up a lot of usable garden space with them covering the ground.

Yeah.

You're growing them vertically.

Now, yesterday, my neighborhood was alive with lawnmowers, weed eaters, guess what? Today is going to bring. My lawnmower [LAUGHTER] my weed eaters. So we decided we'd better get on it because there are some areas- patches now that are, you know, four or five inches tall and they need whacked down some. So here's the season start now.

Yeah. Diane hopped on the lawnmower last night mode- some areas that we're getting a little longer so.

So people get the fever.

Yeah. I don't know why.

Nice days they get the fever.

[LAUGHTER] I do not know why people get the fever the more they lie.

You don't want to cut it short though this time a year. You don't want to- you don't want to take it down. You just maybe make it look a little cleaner.

So, uh, um, I would mow it the same height.

That you're gonna do it all.

That you're gonna do it all- all year long. Yeah. I don't- I don't do a whole lot of adjusting. Wait a minute, you find out what do you think it over?

I have a question. I've got some wild rhubarb that has popped up at my place. I've got some wild onions as well, but I guess- I got this one rhubarb plant. It's an- it's an inconvenient spot. Okay. It's between the house in the garage. It's gonna get limited side. I- I don't want it there. Can I- how- how do I move it? How do I dig it up and move it safely so it doesn't die between the picking up and transplanting the replacing somewhere a little more ecologically friendly.

Get yourself a shovel.

Well, yeah.

Dig around- dig around it, dig underneath it because it's- the root system on rhubarb is really kind of bizarre. It's- it's- it- it kinda looks like a hand. There's gonna be a little fingers of it. Just make sure that you get all of those.

Okay.

And then transfer it to where you want to where you want it to be.

To where you want it to be. Now, where would it be best for that plant to sit? Lot of sun, a little sun, half-and-half mix.

Sure.

Okay [LAUGHTER].

Rhubarb it's pretty tough.

Rhubarb it's really hard to kill.

I asked a free question I got a free answer.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm pretty forgiving John. So yeah. Now my neighbor always wanted me- I'd till their garden as well. And she says, "Now, you see that rhubarb plant." And I said, "Yeah," She's go over on top of that. So my rototiller would go seven inches. So be prepared to dig just a little bit.

A little bit 5,6,7 inches.

Make sure.

No no.

No.

More than that.

Deeper than that.

Deeper than that

Yeah.

Okay

Yeah.

So, um, and make sure that you put the soil, wait, you plant it back at the same depth that it was, because if you planted too deep, it won't.

Okay.

It won't do as well.

Yeah I got you.

But rhubarb is one of those things that you can throw in the compost pile.

And it'll grow

[LAUGHTER] And it'll grow. Yeah. So they do just fine.

Okay.

Yeah.

Now I know.

All right. Cool.

Now I have one more thing.

Okay. Let's go.

So it's Mother's Day Sunday.

It is Mother's Day Sunday.

So honor your mom.

Yeah. Get some flowers, take- get- take her to the local greenhouses. Uh, just take care of it.

Yeah.

Exactly. We got to remember those holidays.

And even if she's not your mom?

Exactly.

Yeah.

Adopted mom.

Well your wife.

Yeah. Exactly.

Yeah.

Yeah. Okay. All right. Mr. Gunnar, are you ready to go?

Whenever you are?

Okay. Well, thank you all for listening today. Thank you for our caller. Jerry's good- look at Jerry's notice- notice. He's got one more thing. You got.

Have one more thing.

You got a minute man.

We need to talk about who's coming next.

Oh yeah. Who's going to be here with us next week?

Next week on my paper. If I can find it.

Shuffle shuffle.

Shuffle shuffle.

[LAUGHTER] You were just.

One would think one would be a little more.

Prepared.

So we have Don Williams next week on the 13th.

So if this- if- if Don is listening today, this is a reminder for Don. [OVERLAPPING].

Don I will give you a reminder call either way.

All right everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KERM Lawn and Garden program. We're glad you joined us today and we'll see you next week.

[MUSIC] You've been listening to Lawn and Garden with the University of Wyoming Extension specialist, Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Presented by KGOS and KERM Radio in Torrington and by University of Wyoming Extension, where we're growing people, knowledge, and communities by extending the land-grant mission across the great state of Wyoming. Good day, and happy gardening.