

A very simple method of preparing the beds is as follows: Mix thoroughly the manure with good garden soil, using three bushels of manure to one bushel of soil. Place the compost in the boxes prepared and pack firmly by tamping with a brick.

After the beds are prepared they will probably heat to some extent but will again cool. After the temperature has cooled down to 70° they may be planted.

#### PLANTING OR SPAWNING.

We have not yet been successful in growing mushrooms from spores. In planting mushrooms we use spawn.

#### WHAT SPAWN IS.

Spawn is dry compost containing the mycelium of mushrooms. There are two forms of spawn, brick spawn, in which the compost is compressed into blocks 8½ inches by 5½ inches by 1 to 1½ inches, and flake spawn, in which the compost is in the form of loose masses. Brick spawn generally comes from England or the United States, while flake spawn comes from France. It is generally conceded that brick spawn is the best, as it does not dry out and deteriorate to such a great extent as does flake spawn.

Mushroom spawn can generally be obtained from any of the larger seed firms. After the bed has cooled down to 70°, the spawn may be planted.

The bricks are broken into pieces about 2 inches square. A hole about 2 inches deep is then made in the bed and a piece of the spawn pressed firmly down, then thoroughly covered with the compost which is then firmly packed. A piece of spawn should be planted to every square foot of the bed. Now cover the bed with about four inches of clean straw and, if convenient, with a piece of old carpet.

After ten or twelve days the bed should be examined. By this time the spawn should have begun to grow, forming fine white threads all through the bed. The straw should be removed and a layer of garden soil 1 or 2 inches thick should be added to the bed and firmly but gently packed down. Then replace the straw and carpet.

Care should be taken to keep the bed moist but not too wet. It is better to apply water with a watering pot every few days rather than drench the bed with a hose or buckets of water.

After about 10 days mushrooms should begin to appear and the straw and carpet should then be removed. The bed should continue to bear for three months or more, giving successive crops of mushrooms every few days. A pound to the square foot is a good yield, although 2 pounds may sometime be obtained.

When no more mushrooms appear the beds should be thoroughly cleaned out, all the compost being removed. It will also be well to scrub the bed thoroughly with formalin before attempting to grow mushrooms again. The compost cannot be used again for growing mushrooms, but it will make excellent fertilizer for the garden, and is also very good for potting plants.

#### GATHERING THE MUSHROOMS.

It is best to gather the mushrooms just before the veil breaks. They are then as heavy as they will become. If left until the veil breaks they begin to lose weight and also the gills rapidly become brown and when cooked do not present the best appearance, as well as giving the liquor a brown colour.