



HDI AFTER SCHOOL MUSHROOM PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

6,000 mushroom bags were transported from the Plant Protection Center (PPC) in Vientiane to the growing houses in rural Khammouane Province



The 6,000 mushroom bags were delivered to Khammouane in two trips on the 3rd and 12th of January. Because the bags contain living mushroom spawn, efforts must be made to transport them carefully. The biggest danger is that they overheat and to avoid this we used wooden beams to keep space between the bags and to maintain air circulation. The team traveled at night when the temperatures are the lowest.



In addition to the mushroom bags, each participating school received the equipment that they will need to take care of the mushrooms as they grow. The equipment includes a water sprayer, bucket, and a container to store water.

6 tons of mushroom bags were loaded up in Vientiane and unloaded in the villages

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Overview:



The steamer at the PPC was renovated to make it more effective in sterilizing substrate



The "Little Wood Ear Mushroom" educational comic book was printed and will be distributed in February



6,000 mushroom bags were delivered to the seven growing houses in Khammouane



The PPC is experimenting with 3,000 bags of wood ear mushrooms to see how well they respond to different conditions

"Nature alone is antique, and the oldest art a mushroom." --Thomas Carlyle

Mme Viengkham, Director of the Mushroom Division at the PPC, carefully inspects and counts each bag before it is loaded



Once the mushroom bags arrived in Khammouane...



... children, teachers, and parents helped unload the bags and stack them under the supervision of HDI staff. These pictures were taken in Mahasay Kao village.



The bags are being stacked in a way that the PPC has not used before and is based on a model that HDI saw used in Taiwan. Stacking them in this way means that less water is needed during the watering and fruiting phase and also that the weight of the bags is not hanging from the roof of the grow house, an important consideration when building with bamboo.

The mushroom bags at the schools are stacked 80 centimeter high to ensure that the children can reach them. At the HDI Mushroom Learning Center the bags are stacked 1.5 meters high. This month ten adults came by the center to see how the mushrooms are grown. We have inoculated a few logs at the center to experiment with growing the wood ear mushrooms on logs.



Each grow house has a temperature chart and thermometer. As part of the learning process, children keep track of the temperature inside the house and see how it affects the growth of the mushrooms.



In addition to the work in Khammouane, the project is committed to helping the PPC renovate their existing infrastructure. This month the steamer they use to sterilize the substrate underwent renovations to make it safer and more effective. Here are some before and after photos.



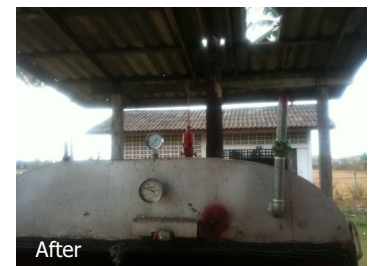
Before



After



Before



After