Button Mushroom Farming

These mushrooms thrive in nearly all regions of the country, provided there is access to shelter, a reliable water supply, and consistent temperatures ranging from 15-30 degrees Celsius. Not only are they versatile in their growth requirements, but they also offer significant nutritional value, serving as an excellent source of lean proteins, antioxidants, and essential vitamins.

Step-by-step guide

1. **Prepare a Suitable Structure:** First and foremost, you'll need a well-constructed structure, preferably a permanent one. This structure is essential to create an ideal environment for mushroom cultivation. It provides the necessary humidity and protection from adverse environmental conditions.
2. **Obtain Mushroom Spawn:** Procure high-quality mushroom spawn, which serves as the starting material for your mushroom cultivation.
3. **Mix Spawn and Substrate:** Mix the mushroom spawn with sterilized substrate material. Afterward, pack this mixture into small gunny bags. Approximately 2 kg of spawn mixed with substrate is sufficient to fill around 50 gunny bags.
4. **Plant the Spawn:** Create holes in the growing medium and place the spawn at a spacing of 9-12 inches apart. Additionally, sprinkle some spawn on the surface to expedite colonization and minimize the risk of contamination.
5. **Incubation Period:** During the incubation phase, store the bags in a dark area, away from direct sunlight, for about 21 days. Once the spawn becomes visible as white, grainy particles on the surface, proceed to the next step.

6. **Casing:** Add a layer of about 2 inches of high-quality soil onto the growing bags. This process, known as casing, is essential to initiate fruiting. Cover the bags with a polyethylene sheet for approximately 2 days to eliminate any soil fungi and tiny insects. When mycelium begins to appear on the surface, it will trigger the fruiting phase.
7. **Maintain Humidity:** Introduce humidity into the cultivation environment. You can achieve this by using a humidity generator or a knapsack sprayer filled with clean water. Spray the air in the room, as well as the floors and walls, ensuring the water disperses as a fine mist. Adequate humidity is crucial to stimulate mushroom growth.

By following these steps and maintaining consistent care throughout the mushroom farming process, you can enjoy a successful and profitable venture in button mushroom farming in Kenya.