**UK start-up, The Magical Mushroom Company, announces large-scale production of its plastic-free packaging made from mushrooms**

*The 100% biodegradable alternative to polystyrene is already being snapped up by major brands, as the company sets its sights set on rapid European expansion*

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The Magical Mushroom Company (MMC), today announces the launch of large-scale production of its mushroom-derived biodegradable packaging, a plastic-free alternative that can be broken up to biodegrade on a home compost heap or flowerbed. Uniquely, this new packaging offers the same performance, at comparable cost, to traditional polystyrene, and is already being used to protect goods ranging from cookers, to cosmetics and a huge variety of everyday consumer products, including Diageo’s non-alcoholic gin brand, Seedlip.

This extraordinary packaging is made possible through mycelium composite technology, pioneered and patented by US firm Ecovative Design LLC. The process takes the post-processing waste from agricultural products such as hemp, hops, corn and timber and combines them with mycelium – the root system of the mushroom. This living material is then grown to shape using 3D moulds of the packaging design. These moulds are baked, hardening the material and preventing any further growth. The full process, from design to prototype takes just 14 days.

MMC Holding International LTD, trading as The Magical Mushroom Company, has the exclusive EU, UK and Ireland licence to produce Mushroom® Packaging. Its first facility, in Esher, Surrey, began production in August 2020 and has capacity to produce more than a million packaging units per year.

The business will open a second UK plant in 2021, increasing total production to more than three million units per year. This will be followed by the opening of plants in Bulgaria and Italy, which together will provide production capacity for the EU of more than six million units annually. A third continental European plant (in Germany) will open in 2022.

With polystyrene causing immense environmental harm, a commercially viable and practical alternative is essential. Packaging produced by MMC is 100% biodegradable at home and breaks down in soil within 40 days. It also fully breaks down in water in just 180 days, meaning it has the long-term potential to significantly reduce the level of plastic waste in our oceans.

MMC is already working with a number of iconic brands that are serious about reducing their environmental impact. Current clients include Lush Cosmetics, Raine Marine, Bodyshop, Seedlip (from the Diageo group) and luxury designer, Tom Dixon.

Paul Gilligan, founder and CEO, commented: “We called ourselves the Magical Mushroom company for a reason. Mycelium’s unique qualities really are magical, enabling us to produce a hard-wearing, cost effective and totally sustainable alternative to polystyrene packaging that biodegrades in the back garden in under 40 days.

“We’re thrilled to be open for business and excited by how quickly we’re scaling up our production and securing ever bigger contracts. Customer feedback has been universally positive and our earliest customers are all – without exception – now coming back for more.”

“With over a decade of experience producing mycelium materials at scale, Ecovative is thrilled to see consumers and brands around the world adopt Mushroom® Packaging,” said Gavin McIntyre, co-founder and Director of Business Development at Ecovative Design. “We are excited to be working with Magical Mushroom Company to further scale this technology and look forward to providing more brands with this breakthrough packaging solution.”

Click [here](https://vimeo.com/483027155/7f8fb9d0b8) for a short video introduction to MMC and mycelium composite technology.

Instagram: @Magicalmshroom

For further information, please contact:

Tom Platt

Account Manager, AD Communications

T: +44 (0)1372 460 586

M: +44 (0)7827 910382

tplatt@adcomms.co.uk

**Note to Editors:**

**Facts about mycelium and polystyrene**

* Mycelium is the root structure of mushrooms
* In the natural environment mycelium plays a crucial role in the ecosystem by breaking down debris on the forest floor
* The Magical Mushroom Company harnesses these unique properties and recreates the natural process to produce large scale protective packaging made from upcycled organic waste materials such as hemp
* Polystyrene is a type of plastic which can take more than 500 years to biodegrade back into the earth
* There are alternative methods to breaking down polystyrene such as incineration, but this uses a considerable amount of fossil fuel