



Care Instructions How to grow your own mother



Record your story with us at our table (see events, below*) or contact us at biodwelling@newcastle.ac.uk to receive instructions to make a voice recording for inclusion in the Listen with Mother? installation.

We want to build a picture of relationships between humans and across species boundaries, so who or what you choose to describe as 'mother' we will leave up to you. You might wish to describe your relationship to the kombucha mother we have shared with you, or you might wish to tell us about your relationship to another type of 'mother' (noun, verb, human or non-human).
If you could literally grow your own 'mother', what qualities and characteristics would it/him/her have and what behaviours be important in caring for it/him/her?

Interpret this in whatever way you want to, and share your story with us.

How do you relate to your 'Mother'?

Grow your own mother

Make tea:

- 1 litre of boiled water (4 mugs, or 8 cups)
- 3 tea bags (or 3 teaspoons loose leaf tea)
- 80g sugar (16 teaspoons)

[every cup of tea made contains 2 teaspoons of sugar]

Allow to cool

Pour into a large (at least 1 litre) vessel/bottle/jar until it is half full

Add the starter culture (which we are calling our mother)

50–100ml of given or grown liquid mother and/or pellicle*

[Optional -> 10ml "live" apple cider vinegar for an acid and microbe boost]

Cover with muslin/cheesecloth/paper towel/any sheer fabric that allows air flow

Place somewhere out of direct sunlight

Wait

*The pellicle is the material that grows on top of your liquid, this is also sometimes called a SCOBY

A SCOBY is a Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeasts

The rate of pellicle growth will depend on many factors in your home including: temperature, humidity, number of people/other species...your mood? Check regularly to ensure you are getting pellicle growth (if you do not have a pellicle after two weeks, then start again with more mother)

Taste the liquid

The liquid is also known as kombucha, or liquid SCOBY

You can drink the liquid, it is supposed to have health benefits

(see Human Care Instructions± at the bottom of the page)

The liquid will be sweet at first, but the bacteria will convert the sugars into cellulose. As it begins to ferment, the taste will become more sour

Make something with your mother

Once the pellicle material is at least 2mm thick, you can harvest it (if you leave it longer, it will keep growing thicker until it needs more tea)

Remove and rinse in the sink

Place on flat surface and allow to dry

Drying slowly gives a more flexible/leatherlike material

This can take up to two weeks

Drying quickly gives a more papery/brittle material

This can take a few hours

Try different modes of drying

e.g. hairdryer, sunlight, oven, something else?±

Did you know that sunlight is anti-microbial?

Different types of tea give different material properties, including flexibility, colour, thickness...anything else?

Try green or black tea (caffeine is a good source of nitrogen)± but herbal teas will also work

Try different types of sugar (brown, white, syrups, molasses, malt)

Did you know that honey is anti-microbial?

You can use it, but it will change how your pellicle grows.

Generations...

When you harvest your pellicle if you choose not to make something with it, put it aside in some of the liquid to start the process again

This is now a new mother that you can use to grow a new batch of kombucha

You can save your mother in the fridge for [up to 2 months] when you are not using it

You can also give it away as a gift

Record your observations

Record voice notes

Mark make

Whatever you are most comfortable with

Talk/sing to your mother

Care for your mother

Share your observations:

bdc.ac.uk/listen-with-mother

biodwelling@newcastle.ac.uk

#ListenWithMother #grow@_ome

±Human Care Instructions

For some people drinking the liquid can be irritating– this is known as an histamine intolerance

If you feed your mother caffeinated tea, the liquid will contain caffeine

When using heat to dry the pellicle, take care. Please don't burn

yourself or your mother

Listen with Mother? Growing Calendar

Events

S M T W T F S

MAY:

Thursday 5th | 6-9pm

Tea with 'mother'

Join us for the exhibition preview, where gallery visitors will share delicious sweetened green tea with our microbial 'mother'.

Saturday 14th | 5-9pm

9 days later | 2nd Gen

Gallery visitors are invited to join us for tea and take home a new generation of microbial 'mothers'. You will receive guidance on how to nourish it through a practice of care, monitoring and control to ensure 'she/he/it' can thrive. See *SCOBY Stories* below.

Tuesday 24th | 11am-12pm

10 days later | 3rd Gen

Gallery visitors are again invited to join us for tea, and to take home a next generation microbial 'mother' that they can care for at home. *SCOBY Stories* below.

Please note: The maturation period varies in each household.

JUNE:

Thursday 23rd | 5-7pm

Crafting Cultures

Students from Newcastle University who have been growing and crafting with their SCOBY mothers will come and share their progress in the gallery.

Dates/times tbc

SCOBY Stories

Inter-Species-Generations

If you have been growing your own mother at home, you are invited to return to the gallery to share your SCOBY stories, experiments and explorations with us and with each other.

Kitchen Table Conversations

A series of discussions featuring HBBE researchers talking about their own relationship to their mothers and other relationships in the lab/workshop/home.

'Listen with Mother?' is a collaboration between Dr. Louise Mackenzie, Kaajal Modi and Professor Ruth Morrow, researchers within the Responsible Interactions research group at the HBBE. It is a part of the BioDwelling project, which explores our relationships with living materials in the context of the home.

May

				5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23

Share your observations:

bbe.ac.uk/listen-with-mother
 biodwelling@newcastle.ac.uk
 #ListenWithMother #grow@_ome

Use this calendar to mark important days in your growing cycle.

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