《宜家计划使用蘑菇做成的环保包装材料》

Ikea plans to use packaging made with mushrooms as an eco-friendly replacement for polystyrene, the Swedish retail giant has revealed.

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The flat-pack furniture retailer is looking at using the biodegradable "fungi packaging" as part of its efforts to reduce waste and increase recycling, Joanna Yarrow, head of sustainability for Ikea in the UK said.

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"We are looking for innovative alternatives to materials, such as replacing our polystyrene packaging with mycelium - fungi packaging," she said.

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Mycelium is the part of a fungus that grows in a mass of branched fibres, attaching to the soil or whatever it is growing on – in effect, mushroom roots.

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US firm Ecovative developed the product, which it calls Mushroom Packaging, by letting the mycelium grow around clean agricultural waste, such as corn stalks or husks.

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Over the space of a few days the fungus fibres bind the waste together, forming a solid shape, which is then dried to stop it growing any further.

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Ms Yarrow told the Telegraph that Ikea was looking at introducing mycelium packaging because "a lot of products come in polystyrene, traditionally, which can’t be - or is very difficult to – recycle".

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While polystyrene takes thousands of years to decompose, mycelium packaging can be disposed of simply by throwing it in the garden where it will biodegrade naturally within a few weeks.

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Ikea’s green drive has already seen it launch vegetarian meatballs as a more eco-friendly alternative to the Swedish meatballs served in its cafes, because of concerns about the greenhouse gas emissions from beef and pork.

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