

Post Cocoon Processing of Mulberry Silkworm

It includes all processes to obtain silk thread from cocoon.

Stifling

The process of killing pupa inside cocoon is termed as stifling. Good-sized cocoon 8-10 days old are selected for further processing. Stifling is done by subjecting cocoon to hot water, steam, dry heat, sun exposure or fumigation.

Reeling

The process of removing the threads from killed cocoon is called reeling. The cocoons are cooked first in hot water at 95-97°C for 10-15 minutes to soften the adhesion of silk threads among themselves, loosening of the threads to separate freely, and to facilitate the unbinding of silk threads. This process is called cooking. Cooking enables the sericin protein to get softened and make unwinding easy without breaks. The cocoons are then reeled in hot water with the help of a suitable machine. Four or five free ends of the threads of cocoon are passed through eyelets and guides to twist into one thread and wound round a large wheel. The twisting is done with the help of **croissure**. The silk is transferred finally to spools, and silk obtained on the spool is called the **Raw Silk** or **Reeled Silk**. The Raw silk is further boiled, stretched and purified by acid or by fermentation and is carefully washed again and again to bring the luster. Raw Silk or Reeled Silk is finished in the form of skein and book for trading.

The waste outer layer or damaged cocoons and threads are separated, teased and then the filaments are spun. This is called **Spun Silk**.