



MOLD The Silent Pest

Say the word "pests" and people think about common household varieties such as ants, roaches, and spiders or even mice and rats. But did you know that molds are also considered pests? That's right. Pests are generally defined as undesirable organisms that are detrimental to humans or human concerns.

Some molds produce gases called mycotoxins that can cause sickness and allergic reactions in humans. There are molds, such as wood-destroying fungi, that cause property damage. Children 2 years and younger are especially susceptible to mold-related illness. Serious complications can result from prolonged exposure. So it is good to know a few things about mold so you can avoid having a problem in your home.

Molds are fungi that feed on nonliving organic matter. In nature, mold and other fungi are responsible for breaking down dead leaves, plant material and wood. Mold derives energy from these materials by secreting enzymes that break them down into simpler compounds that the mold can absorb. This decomposition is a necessary part of Earth's ecosystem.

See "MOLD" on next page



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Molds are ubiquitous; they are found everywhere. Some species of mold can survive in sub-freezing temperatures, while others will thrive in extremely high temperatures of the desert, gaining what little moisture is available from the air. Some molds can even grow on diesel fuel and other chemicals like anti-freeze.

The two most common molds found in indoor living environments are Aspergillus and Penicillium. Given a food source, suitable temperature and elevated moisture or humidity, these molds can begin to grow and flourish on many surfaces within a home.

Molds travel from one location to another by releasing microscopic, seed-like spores which can remain dormant for a very long time. When conditions are right, spores begin to grow into an active and growing mold colony.

Stachybotrys is another mold, often referred to as "toxic black mold", which has gotten massive media attention. Stachybotrys is a sticky, slimy mold that grows on surfaces such as drywall, wood, and even paper on insulation.

While Aspergillus and Penicillium can begin to grow in only a couple of days, Stachybotrys needs at least 7-12 days of constant moisture, warm temperatures around 70-80 degrees and minimal air movement.

Therefore, you are most likely to encounter it in your home if you have an ongoing water intrusion from plumbing, foundation problems, roof or window leaks, etc. Note that you may not see it because it tends to flourish in dark, undisturbed areas.

Since Stachybotrys is a sticky, slimy mold, the spores rarely become airborne. However, it may

begin to release spores if it begins to dry out. It can also release mycotoxins into the air as a defense mechanism against other fungi.

Spores and mycotoxins can be transported into the breathable air of the home and create symptoms such as cough, headaches, asthma, rhinitis and other allergic reactions. In some cases, infants or others with underdeveloped or compromised immune systems can have serious, even life-threatening, pulmonary complications.

If you have any type of mold in your home or business, it must be removed as soon as possible. The visible presence of any mold is an indicator that there may be more unseen mold hiding elsewhere.

Because mold can be harmful, call **ServiceMaster by A-Town Hi-Tech** to identify the cause and develop a strategy to solve the problem and remove the mold.

The Good Life



Good Clean Funnies

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke? It might crack up!

What do you call ten rabbits marching backwards? A receding hareline.

Can February March? No, but April May!



A special touch for Easter fun on a traditional favorite.

Easter Deviled Eggs

Directions

Place eggs into a large saucepan, cover with cold water, and bring to a boil. Let eggs boil for 3 minutes; turn off heat, cover pot, and let eggs cook in hot water for at least 20 minutes.

Drain and cover eggs with cold water. Peel cooled eggs.

Cut cooked eggs in half lengthwise and remove yolks; mash yolks in a bowl with creamy salad dressing, salt, black pepper, hot sauce, and dry mustard until smooth.

Place red, blue, and green food coloring into 3 different bowls and add about 1 cup water to each bowl. Steep 8 egg white halves in each bowl, tinting the egg whites pink, light blue, and green. Drain colored egg whites on paper towels.

Pipe or spoon egg yolk filling into colored egg white halves; cover and chill before serving, at least 30 minutes.

Ingredients

- 12 large eggs
- ¼ cup creamy salad dressing (such as Miracle Whip)
- Hot sauce to taste
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- 4 drops red food coloring
- 4 drops blue food coloring
- 4 drops green food coloring
- 3 cups water, or as desired



BOOST Your Thinking



At least 10 minutes of exercise can give you a mental edge.

Anyone can learn and understand more after just 10 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise. That is the finding of a University of Western Ontario study published in the January 2018 issue of *Neuropsychologia*.

The effects of 10 minutes of exercise appear to be immediate. In the study, a group used an exercise bike for 10 minutes and was then tested on reaction time in completing a non-standard task. The exercisers had an

immediate 14 percent gain in cognitive performance.

Previous studies have shown that 20 minutes of exercise confers brain benefits, but this study shows that even people with physical and mental limitations can benefit from minor exercise.

The implications are important for everyone. If you are taking a test or about to engage in any mental task, 10 minutes of exercise beforehand can give you an extra mental edge.

SAVE Money with Apps

Save more money by using helpful smartphone apps. Here are a few helpful financial apps to help you save, invest and make financial decisions.

The app Acorns rounds up small purchases. If you buy a \$2.50 coffee, it rounds up the price to \$3 and invests the 50 cents in a portfolio of low-cost exchange-traded funds.

You can choose the level of risk, from conservative to aggressive. According to Money,

one user saved an extra \$250 in a few months without noticing any difference.

TaxCaster by Intuit TurboTax can estimate your income taxes. It can do a side by side comparison of your tax obligation estimate with the 2017 and 2018 tax laws, to see how tax reform might affect you.

It can also help you make other tax-related financial decisions such as realizing capital gains, all from your smartphone.



Invest change from purchases with helpful financial apps.



Staying ENGAGED at Work



Use downtime at work to learn a new language or master a computer application.

The typical employee feels disengaged or bored with their work for about 10.5 hours per week. However, it is possible to stay sharp and engaged in nearly any job. The first steps happen the night before. They should make sure they get at least seven to nine hours of sleep.

Look at the commute as an opportunity to jumpstart the day. Mentally review your work for the day, noting the task that you will start first. Then, let go of work for

a while and inject creativity with a podcast or audiobook.

At the office, take a good look at the workspace and consider adding more ergonomic seating, better lighting, or even a plant to make the environment more comfortable and engaging.

Not feeling challenged can also be a significant roadblock to staying engaged at work. Talk to the manager to see if there is room for an extra creative project or maybe time for skill enhancement.



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APRIL SPECIAL

Save 15% off All Cleaning Services
until April 30th!!!

Details and Restrictions: Not valid with any other offer or discount except referral certificates (They are just like cash; get as many as you want!) Minimum order \$250.00. Residential orders only. Commercial accounts ask about commercial pricing. Started April 1, 2019 and ends Thursday, April 30, 2019. Based on schedule availability.

ServiceMaster by A-Town/Hi-Tech
4402 S Danville Dr.
Abilene TX 79605

Upcoming Community Events Around Abilene

Big Country Home & Garden Expo 04/06/19 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Taylor County Expo Center 1700 HWY 36, Abilene 325-673-4822 x 121, Sarah Lazarowitz

\$5-Adults; Free-Military and children 12 and younger

Are you planning to build or remodel a home? Or, maybe you're looking to buy a home. Either way, the Big Country Home Builders Association has the contacts you need.

Easter Bunny Arrival 04/06/19 11:00-11:30 a.m.

Mall of Abilene, Women's Dillard's Courtyard 4310 Buffalo Gap Rd., Abilene 325-698-4351, Brandi Moreno

Free; Photo prices vary. The Easter Bunny hops in to Mall of Abilene for the 2019 spring season.

Abilene Education Foundation Cajun Fest 04/13/19 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Taylor County Expo Center 1700 HWY 36, Abilene 325-677-1444, Christine Curtis-Carr, Free-Admission; \$8-\$20-Meal ticket

Shrimp and crawfish boil with all the fixing's benefiting the students in AISD. Come check out amazing AISD performing arts groups and community musicians as well, all while enjoying a 2 pound serving of crawfish, shrimp and more.

Taste of Abilene 04/16/19 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Convention Center 1100 N. 6th St., Abilene 325-668-3176, Kelly Thompson, \$35-Person

Taste of Abilene is an annual showcase of some of the city's finest restaurants and caterers. This event is presented by the Abilene Rotary Club and proceeds benefit local non-profits and community organizations.

Noah Project Golf Tournament and Par-Tee 04/24/19 - 04/25/19

Abilene Country Club and Fairway Oaks Golf Course 325-676-7107, Ashlee Bradford, \$600-Per team

The annual tournament will be held at Fairway Oaks Golf Course this year with the Par-Tee held the evening before at the Abilene Country Club. At the Par-Tee there will be both live and silent auctions as well as entertainment provided by 360.

Mayor's Race 2019 04/27/19 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Convention Center 1100 N. 6th St., Abilene 325-734-5302, Alyssa Hartley, \$10-\$35

Start a new chapter in your fitness journey by participating in a 10K, 5K or 1K.