

The Building Inspector

Newsletter



Welcome to the Premier Issue of:

“The Building Inspector Newsletter”

Each issue will cover a specific topic along with a few interesting stories and tips.

In this issue, we will present the issues surrounding MOLD in the home, including how to clean and help prevent mold. We've also included a recipe for a refreshing beverage for when you are ready to relax.

MOLD

How do I know if I have a mold problem?

You may have seen white thread-like growths or clusters of small black specks along your damp bathroom or basement walls, or smelled a “musty” odor. Seeing and smelling mold is a good indication that you have a mold problem. However, you cannot always rely upon your senses to locate molds. Hidden mold can be growing behind wall coverings or ceiling tiles.

Common places to find mold are in areas where water has damaged building materials and furnishings perhaps from flooding or plumbing leaks. Mold can also be found growing along walls where warm moist air condenses on cooler wall surfaces, such as inside cold exterior walls, behind dressers, headboards, and in closets where articles are stored against walls. Rooms with both high water usage and humidity, such as kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and basements are often havens for mold. If you notice mold or know of water damaged areas in your home, it is time to take action to control its growth.

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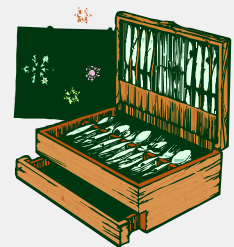
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Quick Tip

Clean your sterling silver pieces the easy way! Simply place a piece of aluminum foil on the bottom of a dish pan or even in the kitchen sink,. Fill with water and baking soda, place the silver in and let stand. Within minutes you should see the tarnish fade away!



How can I control mold growth in my home?

- Fix any moisture problems in your home:
 - Stop all water leaks first. Repair leaking roofs and plumbing fixtures. Move water away from concrete slabs and basement walls.
 - Increase air circulation within your home, especially along the inside of exterior walls, and ventilate with fresh air from outside. Provide warm air to all areas of the home. Move large objects away from the inside of exterior walls just a few inches to provide good air circulation.
 - Install and use exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms.
 - Ventilate and insulate attic and crawl spaces. Cover earth floors in crawl spaces with heavy plastic.
 - Clean and dry water damaged carpets, clothing, bedding, and upholstered furniture within 24 to 48 hours, or consider removing and replacing damaged furnishings.
 - Vacuum and clean your home regularly.
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How can I decrease exposure to mold?

If you know that you are particularly sensitive to mold, avoid compost piles, cut grass, wooded areas and other outdoor areas more conducive to high mold concentration. Inside your home, you can slow mold growth by keeping humidity levels between 40% and 60%, and ventilating showers and cooking areas. If there is mold growth in your home, you should clean up the mold and fix any leaks. You can remove mold growth from hard surfaces and minimize their allergenic effects by using commercial products, soap and water, or a weak bleach solution (1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water).

For More Information on Mold check out these websites:

www.cdc.gov

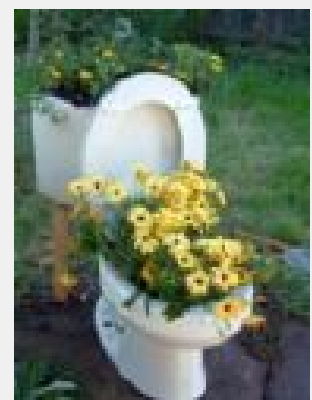
www.epa.gov



Around the House

Have you run out of places to plant those beautiful annual and perennial plants?

Try an old galvanized pail, an old wagon, an unused birdbath or even an old unused toilet! Be creative.....



How do I clean up mold?

The time you are most likely to stir up spores and be exposed is the very time you are trying to clean up your mold problem. That's when you need to be the most careful. First, try to determine the extent of the mold infestation. If the area is small and well-defined, you can do the clean up, as long as you are free of any health symptoms or allergies. However, if the mold problem is extensive, such as between the walls or under the floors, you should leave clean up to a professional

Large Areas:

1. Consider having a professional cleanup the area. To find a professional, check under "Fire and Water Damage Restoration" in your Yellow Pages. If you decide to clean up on your own, follow the guidance below.
2. Protect yourself by using goggles, gloves, and breathing protection while working in the area. For large consolidated areas of mold growth, you should use an OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) approved particle mask.
3. Seal off area from the rest of your home. Cover heat registers or ventilation ducts/grills. Open a window before you start to clean up.
4. Remove all your furnishings to a neutral area to be cleaned later. Follow cleaning directions below.
5. Bag all moldy materials, you will be discarding.
6. Scrub all affected hard surfaces: First with a mild detergent solution, such as laundry detergent and warm water. Then use a solution of 1/4 cup bleach to one quart of water. Wait 20 minutes and repeat. Wait another 20 minutes. Last, apply a borate-based detergent solution and do not rinse. This will help prevent mold from growing again. To find a borate-based detergent, read the ingredients listed on the package label for borates.
7. Give the entire area a good cleaning. Vacuum floors, and wash bedding and clothes if exposed.

Small Areas:

1. Protect yourself by using goggles, gloves, and breathing protection while working in the area. For small isolated areas of mold growth, a cotton dust mask should do.
2. Seal off area from the rest of your home. Cover heat registers or ventilation ducts/grills. Cover all your furniture. Open a window before you start clean up.
3. Bag all moldy materials, you will be discarding.
4. Scrub all affected hard surfaces: First with a mild detergent solution, such as laundry detergent and warm water. Then use a solution of 1/4 cup bleach to one quart of water. Wait 20 minutes and repeat. Wait another 20 minutes. Last, apply a borate-based detergent solution and do not rinse. This will help prevent mold from growing again. To find a borate-based detergent, read the ingredients listed on the package label for borates.
5. Give the entire area a good cleaning, vacuum floors, and wash bedding and clothes if exposed.

In Our Next Issue:

PLUMBING



You can remove mold growth from hard surfaces and minimize their allergenic effects by using commercial products, soap and water, or a weak bleach solution (1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water).

Specific recommendations:

- Keep the humidity level in the house between 40% and 60%.
- Use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months.
- Be sure the home has adequate ventilation, including exhaust fans.
- Add mold inhibitors to paints before application.
- Clean bathrooms with mold-killing products.
- Do not carpet bathrooms and basements.
- Remove or replace wet carpets and upholstery.



Clean all furnishings exposed to mold.

Permeable and washable: Such as clothing, bedding, and other washable articles. Simply run through the laundry.

Non-permeable and washable: Such as wood, metal, plastic, glass, and ceramics. Mix a solution of one cap bleach to one quart of water. Bleach may fade colors, so test your bleach solution before using. If fine, wipe down your articles.

Permeable but not washable: Such as beds and furniture. If these furnishings are moldy, you should consider discarding and replacing them. If you decide it is a keeper, take the furnishing outside. Give it a good vacuuming, and let it air out. When finished, if you do not notice an odor it should be okay. However, watch for any mold growth or health problems



Sources: CDC, EPA

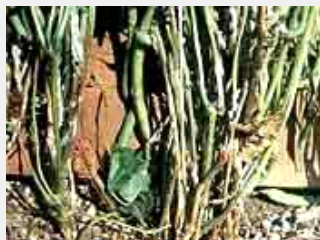
Mold in your garden.

White Mold:

This fungal disease occurs all over North America and can attack a wide variety of plants such as beans, lettuce, and members of the cabbage family. Symptoms on beans begin as water-soaked spots on blossoms, stems, leaves, and pods that enlarge rapidly and become covered with a cottony white mold. Infected leaves wilt, yellow, and die. Infected pods may rot. The fungus overwinters in plant residues in the soil.

Prevention and Control:

Destroy diseased plants as soon as you notice them. Don't wet tops of plants while watering, or water early in the day so plants are dry before nightfall. Use a 3- to 4-year crop rotation with nonsusceptible plants such as corn, beets, or spinach. To prevent infections, spray with an approved fungicide just as buds open and again a week later



Tropical Smoothie

1/2 ripe mango, peeled and seeded

1/2 ripe papaya, peeled and seeded

1 ripe banana

1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice

1/2 cup skim milk

1/4 cup nonfat yogurt

1 teaspoon good honey

2 cups ice



Combine the mango

papaya, banana, orange

juice, milk, yogurt, honey,

and ice in a blender until

smooth. Pour in a tall glass

and enjoy!