

## Summary List of Fungi Included in this Glossary Report

---

Alternaria sp.  
Ascospores  
Aspergillus sp.  
Basidiospores  
Chaetomium sp.  
Cladosporium sp.  
Curvularia sp.  
Drechslera, Bipolaris, and Exserohilum group  
Epicoccum sp.  
Memnoniella sp.  
Myxomycetes  
Penicillium sp.  
Pithomyces sp.  
Rusts  
Smuts  
Stachybotrys sp.  
Ulocladium sp.

## **Alternaria sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Anamorphic Pleosporaceae.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 40-50 species.

### **Where Found**

Soil, dead organic debris, on food stuffs and textiles. Plant pathogen, most commonly on weakened plants.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Commonly recognized.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Type III hypersensitivity pneumonitis: Woodworker's lung, Apple store hypersensitivity.  
May cross react with *Ulocladium*, *Stemphylium*, *Phoma*, others.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Nasal lesions, subcutaneous lesions, nail infections; the majority of infections reported from persons with underlying disease or in those taking immunosuppressive drugs. Most species of *Alternaria* do not grow at 37°C.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

*A. alternata* produces the antifungal alternariol. Other metabolites include AME (alternariol monomethylether), tenuazonic acid, and altertoxins (mutagenic).

### **Growth Indoors**

On a variety of substrates.  
Aw=0.85-0.88 (minimum for various species)

### **Industrial Uses**

Biocontrol of weeds and other plants.

### **Other Comments**

One of the most common fungi worldwide.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on general fungal media. Colonies are dark olive green to brown, floccose to velvety (heavily sporulating). Colonies become pleomorphic over time, and lose the ability to sporulate with subsequent transfer.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive. Young spores or spore fragments may be confused with *Ulocladium*, *Pithomyces*, *Stemphylium*, or *Epicoccum*. (Some *Alternaria* species cannot be separated from *Ulocladium*.)

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive. Readily identifiable on tape lift samples.

## **Ascospores**

Spore category. Produced by morels, truffles, cup fungi, ergot and many micro-fungi.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous.  
More than 3,000 genera.

### **Where Found**

Saprophytes and plant pathogens. Found everywhere in nature.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Spores are predominantly forcibly discharged during periods of high humidity or rain.

### **Allergen**

Highly variable, dependent on genus and species. Poorly studied.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Dependent on genus and species, but the vast majority do not cause disease.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Very many, dependent on genus and species.

### **Growth Indoors**

The cellulolytic ascomycetes *Chaetomium* and *Ascotricha* are frequently found growing indoors on damp substrates.

### **Industrial Uses**

Dependent on genus and species.

### **Other Comments**

Some of the common asexual fungi such as *Penicillium* and *Aspergillus* produce sexual forms under certain conditions; these are classified in the ascomycete group and given distinct names. For example, the most common sexual forms of *Penicillium* are *Talaromyces* and *Eupenicillium*; the most common sexual forms of *Aspergillus* are *Eurotium* and *Emericella*.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

While some ascomycetes sporulate in culture (*Chaetomium*, *Pleospora*), many are parasitic plant pathogens, and sporulate (grow) only on living host plants.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Many ascospores are distinctive. Many others will be classified as "other colorless." In general, ascospores are recognizable by the fact that they have no attachment points, and are sometimes enclosed in gelatinous sheaths or within a sac.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Many ascomycetes are distinctive, and readily identified on tape samples, especially if fruiting bodies are present.

## **Aspergillus sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorphs (sexual state): Eurotium, Neosartorya, Emericella (Ascomycetes).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 200 species.

### **Where Found**

Soil, decaying plant debris, compost piles, stored grain.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Common.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Type III hypersensitivity pneumonitis: Humidifier lung, Malt worker's lung, Compost lung, Wood trimmer's disease, Straw hypersensitivity, Farmer's lung, Oat grain hypersensitivity, others.  
Other: *A. fumigatus*: allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA), allergic fungal sinusitis.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Respiratory, invasive, cutaneous, ear, and corneal disease. Severe, invasive disease is usually associated with immunosuppressed hosts. Many species grow at 37°C (body temperature).  
*A. fumigatus*: fungus ball and invasive disease.  
*A. flavus*: nasal sinus lesions, invasive disease.  
*A. niger*: "Swimmer's ear," and invasive disease.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Partial list:  
*A. flavus*: aflatoxin B1 & B2, cyclopiazonic acid, kojic acid  
*A. fumigatus*: ergot alkaloids, fumigaclavines, gliotoxin, fumigatoxin, fumigillin, fumitremorgens, helvolic acid, tryptoquivaline tremorgens, verruculogen.  
*A. niger*: malformin C, oxalic acid.  
*A. ustus*: austocystins.  
*A. versicolor*: asperciclorin, averufin, cyclopiazonic acid, sterigmatocystin, versicolorin.

### **Growth Indoors**

On a wide range of substrates. Water requirements range widely (dependent on species).  
Aw=0.71-0.94 (minimum for various species).

### **Industrial Uses**

Many, including practical applications in food production. For example, *A. oryzae* is used to ferment soybeans to soy sauce. *A. terreus* produces mevinoлин which is able to reduce blood cholesterol; *A. niger* is used in the bread and beer making industries (enzyme production) and also is able to decompose plastic. *A. niger* and *A. ochraceus* are used in cortisone production.

### **Other Comments**

*Aspergillus* is one of the most common fungal genera, worldwide, and *Aspergillus fumigatus* is one of the most common species found.

## **Aspergillus sp.**

(continued)

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Aspergillus species grow well on general fungal media. Some xerophilic species prefer dryer conditions.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Free spores are indistinguishable from Penicillium, and other genera with small round to oval colorless spores. Penicillium/Aspergillus spores may have remnants of cell wall connections.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

If sporulating structures are present, Aspergillus is readily identifiable on tape samples. Old growth or samples with very large numbers of spores may not contain structures necessary for identification and are reported as "spores typical of Penicillium/Aspergillus."

## **Basidiospores**

Spore category. Produced by mushrooms, puffballs, shelf fungi, rusts, smuts, and many other fungi.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 1,200 genera.

### **Where Found**

Saprophytes and plant pathogens.  
Gardens, forests, woodlands.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Wind; spore release (active mechanism) during periods of high humidity or rain.

### **Allergen**

Probably common.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Type III hypersensitivity pneumonitis: Lycoperdonosis (puffball spores), Mushroom culture hypersensitivity.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Asexual forms may cause rare opportunistic infections.  
The yeast *Cryptococcus neoformans* is a basidiomycete.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Mushroom toxicosis (poisoning) is usually a result of ingestion of the following toxins: amanitins, monomethylhydrazine, muscarine, ibotenic acid, psilocybin.

### **Growth Indoors**

*Serpula lacrimans*, the agent of "dry rot," and other fungi causing white and brown wood rot, grow and destroy the structural wood of buildings. *Poria incrassata* causes a particularly destructive dry rot in buildings.

### **Industrial Uses**

Many mushrooms are edible, and very important in the food industries.

### **Other Comments**

Occasionally, a benign, non-wood rotting mushroom will fruit inside a building, growing in some unique ecological niche if enough moisture is present.  
If mushrooms are found growing indoors we ask clients to submit the entire mushroom for identification.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Most Basidiomycetes will not fruit on laboratory media. Many will form arthrospores or sterile mycelia on laboratory media.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Most basidiospores have a distinctive asymmetrical attachment point. Many basidiomycetes have recognizable spores. *Serpula*, the agent of dry rot, with tan-orange basidiospores, can sometimes be identified on spore trap slides.

## **Basidiospores**

(continued)

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Except for the occasional finding of *Serpula* (above), basidiospores are rarely found on tape lifts, except as a part of normal influx of outdoor spores.

# **Chaetomium sp.**

Ascomycete.

## **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 81 species.

## **Where Found**

Soil, seeds, cellulose substrates, dung, woody and straw materials.

## **Mode of Dissemination**

Spores are formed inside fruiting bodies. Spores are forced out an opening and spread by wind, insects, water splash.

## **Allergen**

Not well studied.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

## **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Uncommon agent of onychomycosis (nail infection).

## **Potential Toxin Production**

Chaetomin. Chaetomium globosum produces chaetoglobosins. Sterigmatocystin is produced by rare species. Other compounds produced (which may not be mycotoxins in the strict sense) include a variety of mutagens.

## **Growth Indoors**

Widespread, cellulolytic, very commonly found on damp sheetrock paper.

## **Industrial Uses**

Used in textile testing and the production of cellulase.

## **Other Comments**

None.

## **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows and sporulates on general fungal media, may need 8-20 days for fruiting body production and sporulation.

## **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive. Chaetomium globosum has small brown "lemon" or "football-shaped" ascospores.

## **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive and readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Cladosporium sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorphs (sexual state): *Mycosphaerella*, *Venturia* (Ascomycetes).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.

Approx. 28-40 species. One of the most common genera, worldwide.

### **Where Found**

Soil of many different types, plant litter, plant pathogen, leaf surfaces, old or decayed plants.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore (formed in very fragile chains, easily dispersed).  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Common and important allergen.

Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

Type III hypersensitivity pneumonitis: Hot tub lung, Moldy wall hypersensitivity.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Generally, non-pathogenic. One species, *Cladosporium carrionii*, is an agent of chromoblastomycosis in subtropical and tropical regions (grows at 35-37°C).

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Cladosporin, emodin.  
(Neither are highly toxic.)

### **Growth Indoors**

Widespread, on many substrates, including textiles, wood, moist window sills. Grows at 0°C, and so is associated with refrigerated foods.

Aw=0.85-0.88 (minimum for various species).

### **Industrial Uses**

*C. herbarum* produces enzymes which are used in the transformation of steroid intermediates such as pregnenolone and progesterone, biologically important hormones used in the industrial production of oral contraceptives.

### **Other Comments**

G.S. deHoog & J. Guarro have placed species associated with human infection in a new genus *Cladophialophora*, i.e. *Cladophialophora carrionii*, *C. bantiana*. Older medical texts refer to this fungus by its former name *Hormodendron* species.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows on all general fungal media. Some species sporulate better than others, and some may need cycles of light in order to produce spores.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive, with wide variation in size and shape. Spores with dark attachment scars and some olive to brown pigmentation are identified as *Cladosporium*.

## **Cladosporium sp.**

(continued)

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Curvularia sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorph (sexual state): Cochliobolus (Ascomycete).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
More commonly found in tropical, subtropical regions.  
Approx. 30 species.

### **Where Found**

Plant debris, soil, facultative plant pathogens of tropical or subtropical plants.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Common.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Other: A relatively common cause of allergic fungal sinusitis.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Occasionally a cause of onychomycosis, ocular keratitis, sinusitis, mycetoma, pneumonia, endocarditis, cerebral abscess, and disseminated infection. Most cases are from immunocompromised patients.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Not known.

### **Growth Indoors**

Yes, on a variety of substrates.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

None.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on general fungal media; most isolates need "light/dark cycling" for sporulation. Colonies are shades of gray to brown.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive; large second or center cell gives conidia pronounced curved shape. Conidia from species with less pronounced curve may be misidentified. Some Drechslera spores are similar.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Drechslera, Bipolaris, and Exserohilum group**

Mitosporic fungi. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorphs (sexual state): Pyrenophora, Cochliobolus, Setosphaeria (Ascomycetes).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.

Some species are more commonly found in tropical or subtropical areas.

Drechslera: Approx. 20 species.

Bipolaris: Approx. 20 species.

Exserohilum: Approx. 8 species.

### **Where Found**

Plant debris, soil. Plant pathogens of numerous plants, particularly grasses.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.

Wind.

### **Allergen**

Common.

Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

Other: Most commonly reported cause of allergic fungal sinusitis.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Occasionally a cause of phaeohyphomycosis, including keratitis, sinusitis, and osteomyelitis. These infections most often occur in immunocompromised persons, although infections also occur in normal hosts. One case of brain abscess reported in an immunocompromised patient.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Not known.

### **Growth Indoors**

Yes, on a variety of substrates.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

None.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on general fungal media although many isolates need "light/dark cycling" for sporulation. Colonies are shades of dark gray to brown.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Group includes Drechslera, Bipolaris, Exserohilum and the rare Helminthosporium. Members of this group can best be differentiated in culture.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

This group is readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Epicoccum sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Two species.

### **Where Found**

Plant debris, soil. Secondary invader of damaged plant tissue.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.  
Spores also released by hygroscopic movement.

### **Allergen**

Common.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No cases of infection have been reported in humans or animals.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Antibiotic substances produced: flavipin, epicorazine A & B, indole-3-acetonitrile.

### **Growth Indoors**

Yes, on many different substrates including paper, textiles, and insects.  
Aw=0.86-0.90 (minimum).

### **Industrial Uses**

None known.

### **Other Comments**

None.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on general fungal media, although sporulation may be strain dependent. Colonies typically have orange reverse pigment.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Intact spores are distinctive. Young spores or spore fragments may be confused with *Ulocladium*, *Stemphylium* or possibly *Alternaria*. Commonly found in outdoor air.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Memnoniella sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Cosmopolitan.

Approx. 5 species.

### **Where Found**

Plant litter, soil, many types of plants and trees.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.

Wind.

### **Allergen**

Not studied.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Not known.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Trichothecenes (trichodermol and trichodermin) and griseofulvins. Trichothecene toxicity is due to the ability to bind ribosomal protein. Griseofulvin has been made commercially available as an anti-dermatophyte drug.

### **Growth Indoors**

Yes, on a variety of substrates.

Cellulolytic.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

Very closely related to *Stachybotrys*.

*M. echinata* produces acetic acid.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows on general fungal media, forming dark gray to black colonies. In *Memnoniella* the spores do not slime down but are held in long chains.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive. Frequently found in conjunction with *Stachybotrys* species.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on tape lifts.

## **Myxomycetes**

Taxonomic fungal category. Slime molds.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 45 genera.

### **Where Found**

Decaying logs, stumps and dead leaves, particularly in forested regions.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

These organisms have both dry and wet spores.  
Wind disperses the dry fruiting body spores, whereas the wet amoebic phase is motile.

### **Allergen**

Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
(Lycogala used in one skin test survey.)

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No reports of human infection.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

None.

### **Growth Indoors**

Occasionally found indoors.

### **Industrial Uses**

None known.

### **Other Comments**

The myxomycetes have an interesting life cycle which includes a wet spore phase and a dry spore phase. When conditions are favorable, they move about like amoebae, resembling primitive animals. When conditions are not favorable they form a resting body (sclerotium) with dry, airborne spores. The myxomycetes are not considered to be true fungi.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

The myxomycetes do not grow on general fungal media.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

While a few are distinctive, many of the myxomycete spores are difficult to distinguish from the smuts. These spores are placed in our group "smuts, myxomycetes, Periconia," due to their similar "round, brown" morphology.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Occasionally seen and identified on tape lifts. Distinctive especially when fragments of the lacy fruiting bodies are present.

## **Penicillium sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorphs (sexual state): Eupenicillium, Talaromyces (Ascomycetes).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 200 species.

### **Where Found**

Soil, decaying plant debris, compost piles, fruit rot. *P. glabrum* has been isolated from diesel fuel.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind, insects (fungus serves as a food source for storage mites).

### **Allergen**

Common.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Type III hypersensitivity pneumonitis: Cheese washer's lung, Woodman's lung, Moldy wall hypersensitivity.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

One species of *Penicillium* species, *P. marneffeii*, is a cause of human infection. It has not yet been found in the United States.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Various toxins by different species: penicillic acid, peptide nephrotoxin, viomellein, xanthomegin, xanthocillin X, mycophenolic acid, roquefortine C & D, citrinin, penicillin, cyclopiazonic acid, isofumigaclavine A, penitrem A, decumbin, patulin citreoviridin, griseofulvin, verruculogen, ochratoxin, chrysogine, and meleagrins.

### **Growth Indoors**

Widespread. Commonly found in house dust. Grows in water damaged buildings on wallpaper, wallpaper glue, decaying fabrics, moist chipboards, and behind paint. Also found in blue rot of apples, dried foodstuffs, cheeses, fresh herbs, spices, dry cereals, nuts, onions, and oranges.  
Aw=0.78-0.86 (minimum for various species).

### **Industrial Uses**

Roquefort and camembert cheese, salami-sausages starter culture; anti-bacterial antimicrobial penicillin, and anti-fungal antimicrobial griseofulvin.

### **Other Comments**

*Penicillium* is one of the most common fungal genera, worldwide.  
Microbial volatile organic compounds (MVOCs) produced: *Penicillium commune* produces 2-methyl-isoborneol, a heavy musty odor.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows readily on general fungal media. Colonies are usually shades of blue, green, and white.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Free spores are indistinguishable from *Aspergillus* and other genera with small round to oval colorless or slightly pigmented spores.  
*Penicillium/Aspergillus* spores may have remnants of cell wall connections.

## **Penicillium sp.**

(continued)

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Penicillium is readily identifiable on tape samples if sporulating structures are present. Old growth or samples with high numbers of spores may not exhibit sporulation structures necessary for identification and are therefore reported as "spores typical of Penicillium/Aspergillus."

## **Pithomyces sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes. Teleomorph (sexual state): Leptosphaerulina (Ascomycete).

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 15 species.

### **Where Found**

Common on dead leaves of more than 50 different plants, especially leaf fodders. Soil, grasses.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Not studied.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No reports of infections.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Sporidesmin.

### **Growth Indoors**

Rarely found growing indoors.  
Can grow on paper.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

*Pithomyces chartarum* is one of the causes of facial eczema in sheep in New Zealand.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows readily on general fungal media; sporulation may be slow, and may require a "light/dark cycle." Colonies are shades of tan to brown.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive multicelled, brown conidia of *Pithomyces chartarum* are recognizable on spore trap slides. Other species are common but more difficult.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive.  
Rarely found on tape lifts.

## **Rusts**

Fungal group. Uredinales. Basidiomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 14 families, 105 genera and 5,000 species.

### **Where Found**

Grasses, flowers, trees and other living plant materials.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Rusts have both wet and dry spores. Wind disperses the urediospores, teliospores, basidiospores, and aeciospores. The basidiospores and aeciospores have an active spore release mechanism.

### **Allergen**

Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No reports of human infection.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Not known.

### **Growth Indoors**

Rusts do not grow indoors unless their host plants are present. They are parasitic plant pathogens and need a living host for growth.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

Rusts are members of the Basidiomycetes class. They have a complex life cycle, producing five different spore types in two different plant hosts. Spore types include: basidiospores, pycniospores, aeciospores, urediospores, and teliospores.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Rusts do not grow on ordinary laboratory media. They require a living host plant for growth.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Rust urediospores and teliospores are airborne; they are distinctive and readily identifiable on spore trap slides.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Urediospores and teliospores are distinctive and readily identifiable on tape lifts. They may be found in dust as part of the normal influx of outdoor microbial particles.

## **Smuts**

Fungal category. Ustilaginales. Basidiomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Two families, 50 genera, and 950 species.

### **Where Found**

On cereal crops, grasses, weeds, other fungi, and on other flowering plants.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Wind disperses the powdery brown teliospores of smut.

### **Allergen**

Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No reports of human infection by the plant parasitic forms.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Not known.

### **Growth Indoors**

Smuts do not usually grow indoors. They are parasitic plant pathogens that require a living host for the completion of their life cycle.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

Smuts are members of the Basidiomycetes and have two spore types: teliospores (dry, powdery stage) and basidiospores (yeast stage).

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

The airborne phase (teliospores) of smut requires a living host for growth and will not develop on laboratory media. The yeast phase (basidiospores) is saprophytic and will grow on general fungal media.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Smut teliospores cannot easily be distinguished from the myxomycetes and certain species of Periconia. They are reported in the "round, brown" spore category: "Smuts, Periconia, myxomycetes."

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

The teliospores of smuts are somewhat distinctive en masse. They are found in dust as part of the normal influx of outdoor particles.

## **Stachybotrys sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 15 species.

### **Where Found**

Soil, decaying plant substrates, decomposing cellulose (hay, straw), leaf litter, and seeds. Growth not influenced by soil pH or copper; growth enhanced by manure.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Wet spore.  
Insects, water splash.  
Wind when dried out.

### **Allergen**

Not well studied.  
Type I allergies reported.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

No reports of human infection. (No species grow well at 37°C.)

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Macrocyclic trichothecenes: verrucarins J, roridin E, satratoxins F, G & H, sporidesmin G, trichoverrol; cyclosporins, stachybotryolactone.

Stachybotrys mycotoxicosis: human toxicosis has been described; may be characterized by dermatitis, cough, rhinitis, itching or burning sensation in mouth, throat, nasal passages and eyes. The best described toxicoses are from domestic animals that have eaten contaminated hay and straw or inhaled infected material from contaminated bedding.

### **Growth Indoors**

Commonly found indoors on wet materials containing cellulose, such as wallboard, jute, wicker, straw baskets, and other paper materials. (See "Characteristics: Growth/Culture").  
Aw=0.94

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

Many human reports of Stachybotrys toxicosis are anecdotal. Stachybotrys mycotoxicosis is currently the subject of toxin research.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on general fungal media. Stachybotrys is slow growing as compared to Penicillium and other common mold genera, and may not compete well in the presence of other fungi. However, when water availability is high for prolonged periods on environmental material, Stachybotrys may gradually become the predominating mold, especially on cellulose containing materials.

## **Stachybotrys sp.**

(continued)

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Spores of the species *S. chartarum* are distinctive, and not easily confused with other genera. Carbon fragments which may be oval and of similar size may sometimes be confused with *S. chartarum*.

*Memnoniella* and *Gliomastix* produce spores with similar gray black pigment.

Note: Spore trap samples are more likely to demonstrate the presence of *Stachybotrys* than culturable samples (Andersen).

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on tape lift samples. Direct microscopic observation of samples is often necessary as *Stachybotrys* may be missed if only culture methods are used.

## **Ulocladium sp.**

Mitosporic fungus. Hyphomycetes.

### **Distribution**

Ubiquitous;  
cosmopolitan.  
Approx. 9 species.

### **Where Found**

Soil, dung, paint, grasses, fibers, wood, decaying plant material, paper, and textiles.

### **Mode of Dissemination**

Dry spore.  
Wind.

### **Allergen**

Major.  
Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma).  
Ulocladium cross-reacts with Alternaria, adding to the allergenic burden of Alternaria-sensitive patients.

### **Potential Opportunist of Pathogen**

Rare subcutaneous tissue infection.

### **Potential Toxin Production**

Not known.

### **Growth Indoors**

Widespread. Found on gypsum board, paper, paint, tapestries, jute, other straw materials. Ulocladium has a high water requirement.

### **Industrial Uses**

Not known.

### **Other Comments**

None.

### **Characteristics: Growth/Culture**

Grows well on all general fungal media. Colonies are dark brown to rusty brown, granular to velvety. Geniculate sporulating structures can be observed with the stereoscope.

### **Notes on Spore Trap Recognition**

Distinctive brown spores. Young spores or spore fragments may be confused with Alternaria, Pithomyces, and others, although Alternaria usually has shades of olive green pigment.

### **Notes on Tape Lift Recognition**

Distinctive, readily identifiable on direct observation. Certain species may form rudimentary beaks and short chains which may be confused with Alternaria.