

***Stachybotrys chartarum*: Black Mold**

By: Jacob Mills

- Blackish green fungus that thrives in moist, warm environments and is commonly found in water damaged buildings.
- Common component of 'Sick Building Syndrome', where a building is home to a biological contaminant that adversely affects the inhabitants.
- Non-invasive pathogen that causes the affliction known as Stachyobotryotoxicosis.
- Commonly has a slimy appearance and texture, but is more dangerous when dry and powdery. Spores are more easily disturbed when in a dry environment.
- Can be introduced to the body by three methods Inhalation, Ingestion and Absorption through the skin or eyes.
- Produces trichothecene mycotoxins with various components such as immune system suppressing and hemolytic (red blood cell killing) compounds. These mycotoxins are both cytotoxic (toxic to cells) and neurotoxic (toxic to neurons).
- Trichothecene mycotoxins inhibit protein synthesis and cause damage to whatever area of the body they are in.
- Symptoms can vary from mild such as coughing and sneezing, to more extreme such as permanent immune system damage and neuron loss.
- Most effective treatment for Stachyobotryotoxicosis is to leave the area it is found in. Removing black mold from an infected building is very difficult due to the spore's resistance to chemical agents and heat.

