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Online Training Available:

<https://eces.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Pest Management in and Around Structures:

<http://www.eXtension.org/>

Contact Us:

<http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Faith Oi

foi@ufl.edu

Jennifer Gillett-Kaufman

gillett@ufl.edu

Twitter @JGillettKaufman

Florida School IPM Focus- Fungi

Is there a fungus among us?

Fungus can mean different things to different people, but with schools you need to pay attention to several areas where fungi can become pests. Fungi in school environments can be molds that grow in moist conditions, mushrooms in playgrounds, wood destroying organisms in the walls or the dreaded athlete's foot making its way around the locker room. For this issue we will focus on trends that may be impacting you this season: molds and indoor air quality.

As always for more information on other pests or on developing an IPM program please visit our [website](#).

Know the Facts: Molds and air quality

- Yes, that picture is of mushrooms growing up from behind a baseboard. Yes, the white powder on the carpet is from the mushrooms (spores).
- No, this is not normal!
- Most indoor fungal problems are caused by molds that grow in small colonies in moist areas. It is very rare to find mushrooms inside a building. (If you do, you have big problems.)
- If you can keep areas such as locker rooms, sink areas, utility areas dry you will minimize indoor growth of molds that can reduce air quality.
- Keeping windows and doors closed during periods of high spore counts (reported on most weather stations) can exclude spores that are floating outside.
- In Florida in the Fall, the number of spores outside can be two to three times the number of spores inside. If you resist the urge to open windows to "freshen up a room" you could be ahead in the war on spores.
- Make sure your AC systems are running properly.



Emphasis on Mold Cleanup

If you find mold growing and think the mold is superficial (on the surface only) try to wash an area with soapy water or with a cleaner approved by your school district. *(If the mold is growing on wood test for moisture levels before washing the wood, so you do not end-up with false moisture level readings.)* If washing removes the mold and the wood or paint looks clean behind the growth, the mold is most likely superficial. Even superficial mold needs to be cleaned up. The **Center for Disease Control recommends** using a diluted bleach solution with one cup of household bleach being added to one gallon of water. However, many school districts have restricted the use of bleach, so make sure that you are in compliance.

News!



We hope you will submit news items and would be happy to help you write a story if you have an idea but don't have the time to write up the information. This newsletter will be published as content arrives, please keep the information flowing! Please send news items to **Jennifer Gillett-Kaufman**.

Visit our website for back issues of **Florida School IPM News**. You can scan the QR code on the right with your smart phone or tablet to get there faster. You will need a QR code reader!