

MOLD & CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS



HYPHA

Mold, a class of fungi that grow in long filament-like structures called hypha, is ubiquitous. It can be any color and look like a web of filaments in early stages of development or furry/bushy later.



ACTIVE MOLD

Active mold will smear when brushed or rubbed. It becomes dry and powdery when inactive. Inactive mold does not mean that it is dead; it may reactivate in the right conditions.



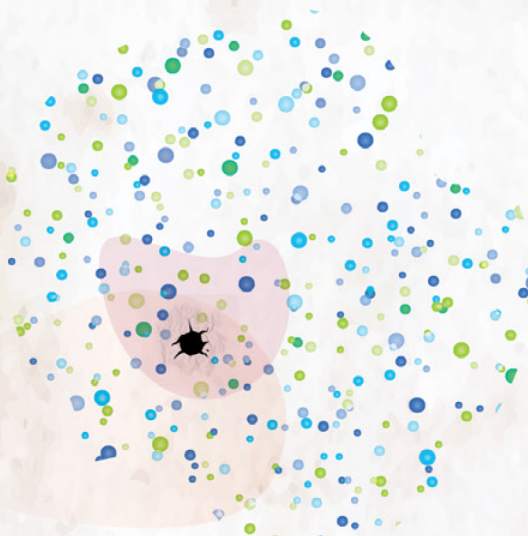
IDENTIFY

Other problems found in collections can sometimes be mistaken for mold—dirt, dust, stains, cobwebs, or fatty acids leaching out of media can have a similar appearance.



ATTRACTANT

Molds are attracted to starches (adhesives, sizing, and cloth), proteins (leather, parchment, gelatin, and animal glues), and cellulose (the main component of paper).



DAMAGE

Mold can weaken, discolor, or make holes in items. Once something has been attacked by mold, it is more susceptible in the future.



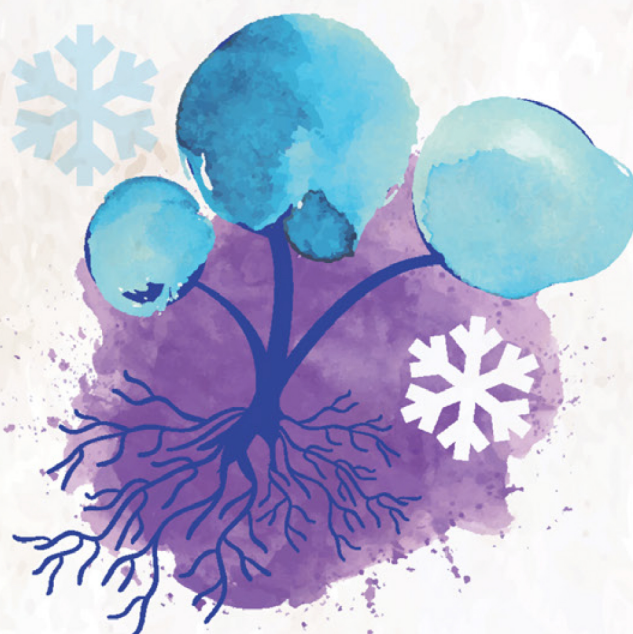
ENVIRONMENT

Similar to seeds, spores will germinate if the right conditions are present, namely high humidity and relatively warm temperatures.



HUMIDITY

When active mold is found, it is important to identify the source of the humidity and reduce the humidity.



FREEZING

Freezing can force mold into its dormant state, but will not remove or kill it.



HEPA

Avoid fungicides and other chemicals when removing mold. HEPA vacuums are effective, and water with a mild detergent can often be used for hard, non-porous surfaces.



Contact a conservator with questions or concerns about mold and collections.



Be mindful about health and safety when dealing with mold.

