

# Difference Between White Mold and Black Mold

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## Key Difference - White Mold vs Black Mold

Black mold and white mold are two types of fungi that are found commonly in many places. They have the ability to live in many different environmental conditions which possess higher amount of moisture content. They spread along many surfaces rapidly, and it is difficult to get rid of them once they are bound and grown on a surface. If the fungal growth is left unattended, it could cause different issues such as health problems and permanent structural damages. Both black mold and white mold share common characteristics but they cause different risks and disease conditions, and therefore the treatment of black mold and white mold differs. **White mold mostly grows on damp surfaces such as papers, fabrics and organic materials within the household and has a flat growth that remains on the surface which could be removed easily while black mold possesses the ability to penetrate and spread beyond the surface of which they grow.** This is the **key difference** between white mold and black mold.

## What are White Molds?

White mold mostly grows in places where the moisture content is high. They are commonly referred to as 'mildew.' Their growth pattern is flat, and they appear in two distinct forms; powdery or fluffy. Like black mold, white mold does not penetrate the surface which they grow. They are surface molds that can be easily removed. White mold with time has the ability to turn into brown mold or black mold. White mold has the ability to affect plant crops very rapidly. They are also referred to as mildew, a plant disease that develops within many crop plants and causes great damage. White mold that affects plants could be categorized into two formats, powdery and downy.

In the powdery condition, the white mold mainly affects most of the angiosperms (flowering plants). They first appear as small white patches, and with time they rapidly grow and cover most of the plant body. In the downy condition, the white mold is mostly found in agricultural crop plants which mainly includes potatoes and grapes. Their appearance differs according to the surface which they grow.



**Figure 01: White Mold**

White mold is mostly considered as a type of mold that affects plant crops. But they also have the potential to affect humans when they are developed indoors. The inhalation of white mold spores could cause many respiratory issues such as coughing, sore throat and also severe headaches. Since white mold is a surface fungi, they could be easily removed with different chemicals available commercially. It is advised to use face masks and gloves during the treatment to remove white mold developments. This prevents the inhalation of mold spores that could cause health problems.

## **What are Black Molds?**

Unlike white molds, black molds develop by penetrating the surface which they grow. They usually do not have a regular shape of growth and appear in different shapes and sizes. Since they penetrate the surface which they grow, the surface gets rotten with time. This could cause permanent structural damage to household properties. Black mold is the very dangerous type of household mold. Once they start to develop, they grow in a very vigorous manner. Black mold develops in places where the condensation levels (moisture content) are high. This includes leaky pipes and within the air-conditioner or at any constantly damp place. Black mold is visible to the naked eye once they develop in colony forms. Therefore it is extremely difficult to identify black mold at its primary stages.

*Stachybotrys chartarum* is commonly referred to a black mold that mostly develops within the household. They are referred to as black mold since they develop black color from the primary stages of growth and development. They are considered to be a dangerous type of mold due to the fact that they possess the ability to produce toxic components known as mycotoxins. These mycotoxins have the ability to cause severe health problems which includes breathing difficulties, allergic conditions, asthma,

chronic sinus infection, depression conditions and fatigue. It also may cause skin irritations that could lead to severe skin diseases.



**Figure 02: Black Mold**

The black mold produces a musty odor that causes breathing difficulties. In younger kids and immunocompromised individuals, the mycotoxin produced by black mold could cause severe long-term health issues. Similar to white mold, the removal of black mold should be conducted with extreme caution with the use of safety wear.

## **What are the Similarities Between White Mold and Black Mold?**

- Both are two types of fungi that cause different ill effects.
- Both can grow in damp conditions.

## **What is the Difference Between White Mold and Black Mold?**

<b>White Mold vs Black Mold</b>	
Black molds are a type of fungi which grows on surfaces and penetrate beneath the surface and cause severe damage.	White molds are a type of fungi which grows only on the surfaces and could be easily removed.
<b>Appearance</b>	

Black molds appear in black and show an irregular growth.	White molds appear in white and show flat growth.
<b>Effect</b>	
Black molds produce mycotoxins and greatly affect humans with severe health issues.	White molds mostly affect plants.

## Summary - White Mold vs Black Mold

White mold and black mold are two types of fungi that develop rapidly on damp surfaces. White mold mostly grows in places where the moisture content is high. Sometimes, they are referred to as 'mildew.' Their growth pattern is flat, and they appear in two distinct forms; powdery or fluffy. Unlike white molds, black molds develop by penetrating the surface which they grow. They usually don't have a regular shape of growth and appear in different shapes and sizes. White mold has the ability to affect plant crops very rapidly. Black mold possesses the ability to produce toxic components known as mycotoxins. These mycotoxins could cause severe health problems. This is the difference between white molds and black molds.

### Reference:

1. "Facts about Stachybotrys chartarum and Other Molds." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 18 Sept. 2012. [Available here](#)
2. Horst, R K. "Powdery and Downy Mildews." Mildew. [Available here](#)

### Image Courtesy:

1. 'Mold on dried Hibiscus sabdariffa' By Geographer - Own work, [\(CC BY-SA 3.0\)](#) via [Commons Wikimedia](#)
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