Environmental Public Health Division
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Baudoinia compniacensis "Whiskey Fungus"

What is *Baudoinia compniacensis*?

Baudoinia compniacensis, also known as Distillery Fungus, Whiskey Fungus, and Warehouse Staining Fungus, is a black fungus that is velvety or crust-like and can reach 1-2 cm in thickness. While it is black in color, this is not Stachybotrys, often referred to as black mold.

Where is *Baudoinia compniacensis* found?

Baudoinia compniacensis is found throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. It has the ability to withstand a large range of temperatures but requires high relative humidity and periodic rain. The fungus can grow on a variety of surfaces, including plants, brick, metal, stainless steel, concrete, and plastic.

The fungus thrives in places where fermentation occurs, such as bakeries and bogs. Distilleries for whiskey, scotch, vodka, brandy, and rum are affected by the fungus too because ethanol is off gassed in the making of distilled spirits. *Baudoinia compniacensis* uses the ethanolic vapor to initiate germination and to express proteins in the fungus that allow the fungus to tolerate high temperatures. The fungus can be found at other places where ethanol can off-gas into the environment uncontrolled, including bakeries and bonded warehouses.

Are there human and animal health risks from *Baudoinia compniacensis*?

Research conducted by ISDH Environmental Public Health Division did not find any reports of health risks from short or long term exposure to *Baudoinia compniacensis*. Although there are no known health hazards, if you choose to remove the fungus from surfaces, we recommend you use N95 masks, goggles, and gloves during removal. Follow all directions and precautions on the label of any chemical you use to remove it.

We did not find any reports of health risks associated with the ingestion of *Baudoinia compniacensis*. If you choose to consume any produce visibly contaminated with *Baudoinia compniacensis*, or any fungus, we suggest thoroughly washing to remove any visible contamination.

Health risks to animals from *Baudoinia compniacensis* have not been reported.

How does *Baudoinia compniacensis* impact our environment?

There is little research on how *Baudoinia compniacensis* impacts soil and water. If *Baudoinia compniacensis* or any other fungus is found in your private water well, the well should be disinfected and examined by a licensed well professional.

Can the released ethanol vapor impact my health?

Airborne ethanol has chronic non-cancer health effects at concentrations of 2,200 µg/m^3 or higher, as determined by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). Air modeling by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) of the proposed MGPI warehouse in Suman, IN determined a peak concentration of almost 1,300 µg/m^3, which is a level that is not expected to cause individuals to experience respiratory distress due to the ethanol vapor.

Ethanol degrades quickly in the environment. We would expect any ethanol that enters the soil or surface water to biodegrade before it had time to enter the aquifer.

People with health conditions that they feel might make them more susceptible to symptoms from exposure to these conditions should discuss these concerns with their physicians.

Sources:

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