

Boca Raton Mold Inspection The silent enemy

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I have a new enemy. It is only 2 microns in size and flies through the air without a boarding pass. It's captured the headlines of newspapers across the country and is my personal nemeses. Unlike some of my adversaries I can't take this one to court, nor can I politely ask it to leave.

I should know. I have tried everything, but I am still losing the battle against a microscopic enemy known as mold. Unlike the muggers and purse-snatchers that I learned to avoid in New York, mold seems to be a more insidious challenger. At first I was ignorant to its pervasive presence in our fair town. But now I know better.

I should. As the reigning Mold Queen of South Palm Beach County I have tried to give up my crown many times. But every time I move away from these lecherous particles, they follow me to the next place. In spiritual terms, that means we have karma together. Although I was hoping for a Jewish doctor or lawyer, it seems my constant companion is a by-product of moisture and condensation, not a nice boy from Scarsdale.

My first experience with mold spores occurred when I rented a furnished condo in West Boca. I knew something was wrong when I couldn't sleep because of heart palpitations. When I called a mold expert on the phone he asked me if my air was thick. "That is a sure sign of mold," he told me. Although I was clueless to air quality when I first moved back to Florida, I am now a self-taught heiress of air, an unabashed airhead.

My knowledge has been honed by months of research, and by repeated battles with this silent stumbling block of domesticity. After buying, and renting apartments that have wrangled my respiratory system (I will leave out the gory details), I have taken on the challenge of mold detection and mold remediation. In English, that means finding mold and trying to eradicate its presence.

At first I didn't want to fight. I simply moved out of every condo or apartment with thick air. But after I found mold in a condo that I own in Hallandale, I decided I had to stay and fight. My friend Don Howe, who I affectionately call the "mold buster," told me that the only way to kill mold spores was to spray bleach and water into the air. And so we did just that. We sprayed the walls; the ceiling and the entire premises with bleach and water. Although the mold experts say that bleach and water doesn't kill mold, I found it to be the perfect anecdote for thick creepy air. Although we altered the air in my condo, it still didn't seem mold free. So I moved again. This time I took refuge in an upscale rental community in Boca Raton. Since mold tends to gather in older buildings, I figured I would do the cowardly thing and just avoid its gaseous presence. I would pay more rent, seek dryer wallboard and unpack my belongings. I would live mold free and breathe easy in the presence of light air.

But my plan was foiled. After two weeks of unpacking my bags I developed a cough and a bad

cold. And after calling in the experts I found out that mold spores had infiltrated the air conditioning system. So again I called in the experts. Blair Thomas, of Accurate Mold Survey, told me he would come right over to test for these invisible invaders. He brought over a borescope to look for mold behind the wall, a stud finder (this could be fun I thought) to check wall construction, and a moisture meter to locate the water source. Thomas told me to avoid oil-based paint, never buy a condo with painted or vinyl wallpaper (been there, done that) and not to use bleach and water to kill mold. Because of the fiberglass insulation inside my walls, Thomas couldn't visually inspect for mold, but he did find elevated moisture levels behind two of my walls.

After I met with Thomas, I found another self professed mold expert. He said he would rescue me from my mold-ridden existence and straighten out my life. He immediately called in Barry, who came to my apartment with an IAQ air sampling pump and a box of Micro 5 spore trappers. Barry assured me that he would isolate and captivate my tiny travelers, and send them to a microbiology lab. The cost of this venture would be \$268, but I would have actual proof of their presence. According to Barry and his boss, I was probably suffering from exposure to *Stachybotrys*.

Although Barry had good intentions (and a bad toupee), he left the spore trappers in my living room. So I did what any good reporter and mold queen would do. I sent the air samples out to Aerotech Labs in Arizona myself. The good news was that I saved \$168; the bad news was that Barry didn't take the samples properly.

I was defeated again. My opponent had outsmarted me. Rather than spend more money for mold vindication, I called in the movers and packed up my belongings. Soon friends began to call with advice and words of wisdom. "Did you hear that Bianca Jagger is suing her landlord for mold," said one friend. "Why don't you call Mold Detection Services in Miami, mdsdog.com, it's a new company with mold sniffing dogs," said my cousin Lynda.

Those were comforting and helpful words. David Leshner, founder of Mold Detection Services, gave me a crash course in mold detection, and alerted me to some of the industry snafus. He also promised to bring over the mold-sniffing dogs (that have a 100% accuracy rate in detecting mold) before I move again. I also consulted with John Alexandre from Service Master, a mold remediation company. He explained the need for an air scrubber, a HEPA vacuum, negative air pressure and an anti-fungal solution known as Fosters 4080.

It seemed that I was getting closer to the culprit and the cure. I was getting my sources in line for future mold battles, and I studied everything on the National Association of Mold Professionals website. I called the Sharper Image and found out that their Ionic Air Purifiers combat mold spores, and I located a lab that sells mold starter kits and air sampling machines.

I figured if knowledge was power, then my only rivals were in the White House. That is until I read the fine print in an article about mold from Newsday sourced from the Centers for Disease Control. "The CDC does not recommend routine sampling for molds. Since the susceptibility of individuals can vary greatly, either because of the amount or type of mold, sampling and culturing are not reliable in determining your health risk...Furthermore, reliable sampling for

mold can be expensive, and standards for judging what is and what is not an acceptable or tolerable quantity of mold have not been established.”

As I said, knowledge is power.

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Mold Detection Services can be reached at: 305-571-2280. Mold-sniffing dogs are available at all times. All technicians are expertly trained and tested for mold detection and remediation.