

# Alternaria

**Natural Habitats** Common saprobe and pathogen of plants. Typically found on plant tissue, decaying wood, and foods. • Soil • Air outdoors

**Suitable Substrates in the Indoor Environment**

Indoors near condensation (window frames, showers) • House dust (in carpets and air)  
• Also colonizes building supplies, computer disks, cosmetics, leather, optical instruments, paper, sewage, stone monuments, textiles, wood pulp, and jet fuel

**Water Activity**  $A_w = 0.85-0.88$

**Mode of Dissemination** Wind

**Allergenic Potential** Type I allergies (hay fever, asthma) • Type III (hypersensitivity pneumonitis)

**Potential Opportunist or Pathogen** Phaeohyphomycosis {causing cystic granulomas in the skin and subcutaneous tissue} • In immunocompetent patients, *Alternaria* colonizes the paranasal sinuses, leading to chronic hypertrophic sinusitis

**Industrial Uses** Biocontrol of weed plants • Biocontrol of fungal plant pathogens

**Potential Toxins Produced** Alternariol (AOH) • Alternariol monomethylether (AME)  
• Tenuazonic acid (TeA) • Altenuene (ALT) • Altertoxins (ATX)

**Other Comments** *Alternaria* spores are one of the most common and potent indoor and outdoor airborne allergens. Additionally, *Alternaria* sensitization has been determined to be one of the most important factors in the onset of childhood asthma. Synergy with *Cladosporium* or *Ulocladium* may increase the severity of symptoms



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