

Baudoinia compniacensis

“Whiskey Fungus”



November 2023

Overview

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 centimeters in thickness. While it is black, it is not *Stachybotrys chartarum*, often referred to as black mold.

Where *Baudoinia compniacensis* is Found

Baudoinia compniacensis is found throughout North America, Europe and Asia. It has the ability to withstand a wide 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, and thrives in places where fermentation occurs, such as bakeries and bogs.

Distilleries for whiskey, scotch, vodka, brandy and rum are also affected by the fungus 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.

Potential Health Risks

No cases of human health effects have been reported due to *Baudoinia compniacensis* exposure. However, the lack of clinical studies and research on this fungus makes it difficult to determine potential health impacts. In the event of fungus removal, the use of N95 masks, goggles and gloves is recommended. Follow all directions and precautions on the label of any chemical used to remove the fungus.

Similarly, no reports of health risks associated with the ingestion of *Baudoinia compniacensis* have been reported. If one chooses to consume produce visibly contaminated with *Baudoinia compniacensis* or any other fungus, it is recommended that one thoroughly wash the product to remove any visible contamination.

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

Environmental Impact

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

Sources:

Bogs, J. (2016, October 6). *Black Fungal Growth and Distilleries*. Retrieved from <https://bygl.osu.edu/node/599>.

Ohm RA, et al. (2012, December 6). *Diverse lifestyles and strategies of plant pathogenesis encoded in the genomes of eighteen Dothideomycetes fungi*. *PLoS Pathog.* 2012;8(12):e1003037. doi: 10.1371/journal.ppat.1003037.

Renewable Fuels Association, (2015, February). *The Impact of Accidental Ethanol Releases on the Environment*. Retrieved from <https://ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Impact-Of-Accidental-Ethanol-Releases-on-the-Environment.pdf>.

Scott, J.A., et. al. (2007) *Baudoinia*, a new genus to accommodate *Torula compniacensis*. *Mycologia*, 99(4), 592-601.

For additional information on environmental hazards, visit:

<https://www.in.gov/health/eph/environmental-hazards/>

