

The Fungi Kingdom

Molds, Mildew, and Mushrooms...

Have you ever left a sandwich in your lunchbox for a while? If you have, you may have seen mold growing on it. The mold belongs to the kingdom called, **Fungi**. Mushrooms also belong to the Fungi Kingdom. Organisms of the Fungi Kingdom absorb their food and reproduce by making spores. If your bread gets moldy it means that the spores are growing. They have “eaten” moisture and are reproducing. YUCK!

When you bring a loaf of bread home from the store and open it, you are exposing your bread to many tiny spores that float all the time in our air. They are so tiny you can't see them. If the spores land somewhere warm and moist, they will start growing. Your bread will get moldy. You will have observed a major phylum in the Fungi Kingdom – Molds!

Another phylum in this kingdom helps keep us well. If you have ever had strep throat, you may have taken penicillin. The pink liquid medicine your doctor prescribed is created from a mold in another Fungi Kingdom phylum, Fungi Imperfecti. The mold from this phylum grows naturally on fruit such as oranges and contains chemicals that kill bacteria.

Fungi Fun?...

What's the Best Bread For a Mold Garden?

Try an experiment from the Fungi Kingdom. Collect many different kinds of bread – wheat, rye, Italian, white, etc. Put a few drops of water on each. Enclose each slice in a plastic lunch bag. Which kind of bread grows mold the best? Share your results with Maggie. We'll see if classrooms in different areas get similar results.