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## Black Mold on Corn

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# Black Mold on Corn

## **Abstract**

There have been several reports of a black mold covering the leaves and stalks of corn plants across the state. Walking in these fields turn a white shirt black quickly. Not surprisingly, combining this blackened corn is also very dirty.

## **Keywords**

Plant Pathology and Microbiology

## **Disciplines**

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## Black Mold on Corn

By Alison Robertson, Department of Plant Pathology

There have been several reports of a black mold covering the leaves and stalks of corn plants across the state. Walking in these fields turn a white shirt black quickly. Not surprisingly, combining this blackened corn is also very dirty.

The black mold is saprophytic fungi – microorganisms that feed on dead plant material. The wet weather over the weekend followed by warm, humid weather and morning dews have favored growth of these organisms. They are not known to produce toxins, and the harvested grain should look relatively clean.

Individuals with allergies or respiratory problems are encouraged to wear dust masks to reduce breathing in masses of spores. These saprophytic fungi are a big contributor to the mold portion of the pollen and mold counts. It is also important to keep combine engines and can filters clean.

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