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# Tucson Green Times

Live Green. Live Healthy. Live Wise. *It's a lifestyle.*

March 15 - April 15, 2010

## Got a nose for mold?



PHOTO: James Patrick

John Setford, a certified mold inspector in Tucson, has a private conversation with his canine partner, Rocky - a six-year-old beagle (and a rescue dog) who spent a year in training learning the science of mold detection.

### Mysterious mold can be an uninvited, unhealthy home intruder

By Gretel Hakanson

Tucson Green Times - March 2010

Many of us spend a lot of time, effort, and money making our homes places of respite and relaxation as well as healthy places to dwell. But your home could be host to a hidden health hazard. Often unseen by the homeowner, dangerous mold infestations are surprisingly common in Tucson homes, considering our dry climate.

John Setford is a certified mold inspector and owner of Arizona Mold Dog Services. It's his business to know about mold. "Whether you are in Tucson, Chicago, Florida, Europe, England, or Russia, mold is in the air," he says. "There are hundreds of molds in the air all the time. Nature did this to us. They're out there floating around and they're looking for a place to land

so they can start growing and eating something."

The recipe for a mold problem in the home is water combined with a 40 percent or greater humidity level. Mold exists in two "states" - viable and non-viable. Viable mold is living, growing mold. If not completely removed, viable mold can eventually become dormant, or nonviable, if and when humidity levels decrease. Setford says that nonviable mold can continue to produce spores for up to eight years and it only takes a water leak or high humidity levels to convert it back into viable mold.

"Mold needs 40 percent humidity to grow, something wet like a pipe leak, the filter under your kitchen sink, the drain - mold is going to find it within 24 hours. Within 48 hours you're going to see mold. Every day that goes by and the water remains, it will get worse and worse until you have a monster in your house," says Setford.

### Health Hazards of Mold

Of the 25 or so common varieties of mold found in Southern Arizona, only about five of them are toxic, according to Setford. However, nontoxic mold is a food source for the toxic mold varieties so it's rare for one to exist without the other. Furthermore, mold affects different people differently, even people living in the same house.

Young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are the most adversely affected by mold. Symptoms are typically associated with the respiratory system: allergies, asthma, coughing, sinusitis, shortness of breath, burning in the lungs, and sore throat. Headaches, nausea, memory loss, and chronic fatigue symptoms could also be present. Most of time, people with a mold allergy or mold poisoning don't realize that mold is the cause of their illness until after they have unsuccessfully tried other treatments.

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## New wellness coalition promotes community involvement

By Martine Mathewson

Tucson Green Times - March 2010

Tucson has earned a reputation for offering its residents the cutting edge in holistic health, with alternative practitioners and health gurus of all varieties, as well as being home to top research institutions for progressive Western medicine such as the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, founded by Andrew Weil, MD.

Although Tucson's health and wellness options are vast, a group of local wellness practitioners wanted to celebrate this, build community around it, and expand the benefits further.

Then in late 2009, a small group of integrative healthcare professionals met to form the Arizona Integrative Wellness Coalition (AIWC). The group's primary objective was to establish cooperative

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## New Green Chamber of Commerce launches in Tucson

Local businesses aim for vibrant green economy

By Gretel Hakanson

Tucson Green Times - March 2010

The Southern Arizona Green Chamber of Commerce (SAGCC) officially launches on March 19, 2010. SAGCC is a non-profit trade association made up of businesses, organizations, and individuals created to advocate green and sustainable practices in our community.

"The idea behind the chamber is to bring individuals, non-profits, NGOs, businesses, and government to the table so we can all have a hand in crafting policies and practices that are going to advance sustainability in our community," says

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# Yoga unwinds body and mind

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breath, we're cultivating that present moment awareness," says Weintraub. "In the present awareness, there is no sadness, grief, or trauma in that moment. In that moment, we are whole and yoga gives us a cumulative experience of moments of wholeness, moments of contentment, and moments of peace."

Sometimes defined as "breath control," Pranayama is an important component of Hatha yoga. The ancient sages taught that prana, the vital energy force circulating through us, can be cultivated and channeled through breathing exercises. Through the practice of Pranayama or breathing exercises, the mind is calmed, rejuvenated, and uplifted. Many yoga practitioners believe that Pranayama is an important bridge between the physical practices of yoga and the internal, surrendering practices that lead us into deeper states of awareness.

Lily Cann has experienced the mood-improving benefits of yoga first-hand. "Yoga makes you aware of your body, the sensations in your body, your emotions, and your thoughts," she says.

After experiencing a series of stressful life events, Cann read Weintraub's book and has since become a certified LifeForce teacher. Through yoga, she says, "You become the

observer where you no longer identify with emotion, you just observe it. It's funny, when you observe it, it has its own way of dissolving because it doesn't belong to you. Yoga is the tool for how to get to that place."

## Yoga and the Mind/Body Connection

Bruce Bowditch teaches at Yoga Oasis in Tucson, is author of two books about yoga, and works as a yoga therapist. He says, "Your mind and your body are really inseparable. One affects the other profoundly and there really isn't any separation."

Have you ever wondered why your back aches when you're stressed? Or maybe why you get a headache when you're feeling overwhelmed? "Think of it this way," Bowditch says, "every experience you've ever had is stored in your mental memory and you can feel the emotions you felt around a particular experience that happened years ago. When you think about it again, you can evoke a similar emotional experience. Inevitably, if you pay attention, any emotional experience you have also has a sensation in the body."

The limitations we experience in our body - such as chronic holding, chronic pain, chronic tightness - often have to do with how we chronically or habitually feel emotionally, explains Bowditch. The yoga asanas are

designed to move prana in a certain way and each has a different energetic feel to it. For example, forward bends are calming and handstands are energizing. By moving the body into the different forms, you are essentially creating different patterns of movement and energy. During the course of a yoga class, a well-combined series of poses can actually take your mental state into a different place and start to change the patterns in the body that create an imbalanced mood.

"Your state of mind affects how your body responds. Yoga works the other way, as well, where by working through the body, you can start to unwind the mind," Bowditch says. "That's the cool thing about yoga - it goes back and forth between unwinding your mind and unwinding your body, and back and forth."

## Starting A Yoga Practice

Living in Tucson, we are incredibly fortunate when it comes to yoga; there are so many talented and experienced yoga teachers who offer regular classes - along with teachers who travel to Tucson for workshops, a variety of styles to choose from, and an array of surprisingly affordable sessions.

To find a class that's right for you, Bowditch advises: "Know the level of class that you're getting into and know your

teacher." Most teachers would welcome a phone call in advance to discuss the class and explain their teaching style. Bowditch suggests auditing a class first. "I would be more than happy to have anyone observe one of my classes and I would encourage someone new to yoga to do that. There are different approaches and styles to teaching and one is going to suit your personality better than another. You're going to resonate with one teacher better than another, even within the same style of yoga."

If mood management is your goal, Weintraub recommends finding a teacher who is comfortable working with the breath and encourages various breathing methods throughout the class.

"Yoga will show you that you are so much more than the challenges life brings you," Weintraub says. "You are so much more than the negative beliefs you may have about yourself or the world. You are so much more than your mood. Yes, a negative mood or stress may visit but what yoga teaches is we're so much more than that."

For a list of local yoga studios and teachers, the Arizona Yoga Association has a directory posted online at: [www.azyoga.com](http://www.azyoga.com).

**Author:** Gretel Hakanson is a local freelance writer.

# A nose for mold

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## Causes of Mold in the Home

J.P. Huestis, president of Global Prevention Services, specializes in mold remediation. He says, "Water is the key ingredient. How the water comes in the house happens in a bunch of different ways: You can have roof issues, plumbing issues, drain issues, windows that are faultily installed, or even grading issues."

With the onset of warmer weather, many of us will be switching on our evaporative coolers, but be aware that they are a common culprit in mold problems. "We see some of the most horrendous mold damage with the improper use of swamp coolers," says Huestis.

Proper use of a swamp cooler involves venting the house. To avoid excessive humidity, the house must be vented to allow dry air to enter and moist air to be expelled. Simply opening a window an inch or two will create a vent. Otherwise, the walls, furniture and other belongings can accumulate too much moisture, leading to mold-friendly humidity levels.

"We have seen entire homes blossom in mold - cabinetry, guitar cases, picture frames, couches, all sorts of clothing, shoes, speaker covers, just about everything," Huestis says.

Many people have run their swamp coolers for years without a problem, however, Huestis cautions, "Even the smallest interior leak, such as a tub or toilet overflow, if not dried up immediately, is enough to boost the humidity and moisture content of the house to the tipping point."

Huestis recommends checking with your insurance company - especially tenants with renter's insurance - to confirm that it covers damage and content loss due to water and mold.

In home inspections, Setford almost always finds mold in the bathroom. He calls this "maintenance mold" because it can typically be removed through proper cleaning. It can be found in the shower, tub, caulking, grout, ceiling, inside the toilet tank, and windows. It may be black, green, yellow, brown or light pink and it can grow on just about any material - wood, plastic, glass, metal, concrete. Cleaning the affected area with hydrogen peroxide will usually eliminate maintenance mold. But, Setford says, if the mold continues to reappear after using hydrogen peroxide, that means there's mold somewhere else in the house. A plumbing leak, roof leak, or grading problem may have caused mold growth inside the walls, ceiling, floor, underneath baseboards or behind wallpaper.

It's even possible to have mold in a brand new home. Setford cites an example where mold might be present in the building materials. "The wood used to build the home may have been contaminated with nonviable mold before the house was even built. If for some reason that wood gets wet - maybe there is a roof leak or a leak caused during the stucco installation - water will slowly saturate the wood. All of a sudden, the mold starts to grow again." The homeowner may be completely unaware of the leak.

## Detecting Mold in the Home

Sometimes mold is visible, but if it hap-

pens to be odorless and invisible, how do we detect it? We can turn to the other half of the Arizona Mold Dog Detection Services team - Setford's canine partner, Rocky. Rocky is a six-year-old beagle (and a rescue dog) who spent a year in training learning the science of mold detection.

Rocky detects mold by scent. "If he detects mold, he sits, he stops and spends a second trying to figure out where it is," Setford says. "Then he points to it with his paw. He will show me if it is at a baseboard, a windowsill, or even up high. If it's up high, he gets up on his hind legs and points up with his paw."

Huestis is familiar with Rocky's work. "Rocky is actually very sensitive to mold. It is a good combination to have Rocky [in the detection process] because there may be areas you are completely unaware of that water may have affected in the past."

In each area where Rocky shows his paw "alerts," Setford takes an air sample. He sends the air samples to a lab to determine the type of molds and amount of spores in the air. The results are sent to the homeowner and it's up to homeowner to remove the mold. Setford recommends having a professional remediation company remove the mold to ensure the process is done properly. After remediation, Rocky and Setford will do a final analysis to confirm that the mold has indeed been removed.

## Preventing Mold

The first and most obvious aspect to prevention is good housekeeping.

"Normally with a dry house and regular cleaning habits - vacuuming and dusting - the bulk of any dry spores that have moved around and settled on surfaces will be removed," Huestis says.

Fixing and drying water leaks as quickly as possible is crucial to preventing a mold outbreak. "After about two or three days you can see visible signs of mold colonization so you've got a very short window and that's why insurance companies will pay to dry out your house," says Huestis. "If you have an emergency water leak, call your insurance company. They'll put you in touch with a company like ours and we will dry out your structure, hopefully before it becomes a mold issue. Mold prevention starts with keeping a dry house."

Most of us desert-dwellers have a special appreciation for water. Hungarian biochemist Albert Szent-Gyorgyi summed it up well when he said: "Water is life's mater and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water."

There's no mold without water either. Keeping your home dry is essential for a healthy, mold-free home.

**Author:** Gretel Hakanson is a local freelance writer.

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