

LIVING WITHOUT MOULD

Removing Mould

Mould is not just a cleaning issue it is a health problem. Some moulds produce Mycotoxins, which can cause allergies, asthma, cold-like symptoms, skin rashes, sinus inflammation and eye irritation. Living or working in an environment where mould persists has many challenges and it can't be solved with a bottle of bleach. The type of chlorine bleach which is available at your local supermarket will not kill mould. It will remove the surface mould and bleach the colour out of mould stains, but it won't solve the problem and even household vinegar is more effective than bleach.



There are a few very effective products for cleaning indoor mould; they are **Mould Master**, **Evaporative Air Solutions Liquid Spray** (EAS Liquid Spray) and **Wet and Forget Indoor**. Simply spray onto surfaces, leave for a up to two hours then clean off with a damp cloth.



Clove Bud Essential Oil is very effective at killing some moulds, but not all moulds. Products such as **My Habitat's Mould Master** contains clove oil but it is also blended with other essential oils including lavender, eucalyptus, rosemary, orange, lemon, cinnamon and oreganum, increasing it's effectiveness. **Mould Master** is also effective at cleaning leather, but please do a test patch in an inconspicuous place to test colour fastness before applying to the remainder of the garment, couch or car seat. Other essential oils which can be added to mould killing products are grapefruit, lime, tea tree and lemongrass.

EAS Liquid Spray was developed over many years between a German Mycologist (mould scientist) and an FNQ Air Conditioning specialist. The challenge was to create an effective product without toxins, that could be safely used around air conditioning systems without causing harm to people or machines. Utilising tea tree essential oil in a powerful cleaner, EAS liquid Spray is effective on all hard surfaces.

Wet and Forget Indoor is an ammonia-based cleaner which comes in a handy 2 litre spray pack. It cleans, deodorises, disinfects, and inhibits the regrowth of mould.

Wardrobes and Linen Cupboards



Figure 1. Ventiladed Shelving

Firstly, pack your blankets, quilts and susceptible clothing such as leather jackets and woollens into vacuum seal bags, remove the air and pack them on a shelf where they won't be disturbed as they can reinflate if they have items stacked on top of them or they are disturbed. Make sure that you do this on a dry day with low humidity to ensure that there is as little moisture as possible in the vacuum seal bag and don't put an item into the bag if it already has mould on it.



Wardrobes and linen cupboards should have ventilated shelving and never use chipboard as it is porous and traps moisture. Use ventilated shelving in conjunction with a **Dampp Chaser**. They are available in 4 lengths to suit cupboards ranging from single to double wardrobe size. The largest **Dampp Chaser** uses just 35 watts which is far less than a dehumidifier and there are no containers to empty. The rod is placed in the back of your cupboard or wardrobe and the rising warmth circulates the air keeping the space dry and mould-free. It is important that you don't place too many items in the bottom of your cupboard as this blocks the circulation of air and reduces the efficiency of your **Dampp Chaser**. The cupboard doors should be kept closed.

As wet air is heavier than dry air, your shoes in the bottom of the wardrobe are often the first place that you notice mould. When you buy new shoes, keep the boxes and store your shoes in them. Collect the small sachets of Silica Gel from medications, vitamins and electrical appliances and place them in the shoe boxes.



Figure 2. Dampp Chaser

Avoid carpet when you are living in a damp or humid climate, especially in wardrobes, as the fibres trap moisture holding dampness where it isn't wanted.

Dessicants

At Enviromart we have 750 g Jars of Silica Gel beads so that you can make your own Silica Gel moisture sponges. You can place the beads in a bowl in your cupboard or you can make use of an odd sock. Just half fill the sock with Silica Gel and tie the top with a knot. To dry the beads, you can place them in an oven on low heat but far better, place the beads on a towel in your microwave on low heat, dry them for 2 minutes, then remove the towel as the moisture will have soaked into the fabric. Allow the beads to cool, then dry for a further minute. Check the beads to see if they are dry enough. If not, again allow them to cool and give them another minute on low heat in your microwave.

Silica Gel beads change colour as they absorb moisture, so the colour change will tell you when they are dry enough. Silica gel is a more sustainable choice, as most other dessicants are single use products, being costly and wasteful.

Shady Grove Mould Essential Oil Blend can be used as a base to make your own cleaning product or place in a diffuser or oil burner to destroy musty, mouldy smells. Both **Shady Grove Mould Blend** and the **Shady Grove Mould Room Spray**, are used to kill mould spores in the air.



Mould Prevention

Environmental Air Solutions Evaporative (EAS) is an amazing product. The all natural evaporative is powered by essential oils which vaporise over many weeks, killing mould. After you have removed mould from surfaces, place the refillable pots into wardrobes, linen cupboards, boat cabins and rooms, to kill mould in the air, therefore stopping it from regrowing on surfaces. EAS is an excellent mould preventative and is a breathe of fresh air for allergy sufferers. Place pots of EAS on top of air conditioning units as the vapours will be drawn through killing mould in the air conditioner and spreading the fragrant vapour around the room.



Figure 3. EAS Evaporative

Curtains

The back of your curtains are likely to go mouldy if the windows are open when it is raining. Wash curtains, before the mould stains them, as mould can be washed away but if it is left to form a stain you won't be able to wash it out. Mould stains are permanent! You may find that blinds are easier to maintain as you can wipe them over regularly with Mould Master or Environmental Air Solutions Liquid Spray. Always do a test patch to ensure colour-fastness and non-marking.

Burning candles can help to dry the air on wet days and if the candles contain some of the essential oil mentioned above there will also be anti-mould benefits too. Some indoor plants which may assist to reduce mould issues inside your home, include Orchids, Peace Lillies, Mother-in-Law's Tongue, Palms and Ferns as they will improve air quality.

Air Flow

If rain is on the horizon, close your windows and doors because you need to keep the dampness out, but leave your ceiling fans on so that air is circulating.

Building Maintenance

In the wetter months, ensure that your gutters are cleaned as water will pool in the gutters trapping moisture around your home. You can also trim tree branches to allow more sunlight onto exterior walls. Avoid placing garden beds against your exterior walls as the plants will shade the soil and maintain moisture around the home. This can also make it difficult to monitor termite activity.

When you are selecting roofing insulation choose an aluminium foil product rather than a fibre. Fibreglass, wool, paper and polyester can trap moisture in your ceiling, causing mould issues on ceilings and in the air.



Bathrooms



Figure 4. Squeegee to Dry Surfaces

The most common place to fight mould is in the shower, as mould feeds on moisture and grout is the biggest challenge. Firstly, remove the moisture by using a squeegee after showering. It seems like a nuisance but after a bit of practice it only takes half a minute. It will keep the shower cleaner and reduce mould issues but nothing will kill mould once it gets under silicon, so using a squeegee will protect the longevity of the silicon too. Spray the grout and silicon with EAS Liquid Spray, Mould Master or Wet & Forget Indoor between shower cleans and always have a tub of EAS evaporative in your bathroom to maintain a mould-free environment.

Musty Odours in Linen

If you find linen or clothing which has a musty dank odour, firstly place the fabric into a large plastic bag and sprinkle it with dry bicarbonate of soda and leave it in the bag for a week. Then wash it with a cup of vinegar and half a teaspoon of tea tree oil in the washing machine with water, this will improve it but if it has been in this state for a long time the odour probably won't wash out.

Cameras and Lenses

In humid climates a fungus will grow on the lenses of cameras, binoculars and telescopes causing costly damage. This is a slow and progressive problem. You will notice some loss of contrast and an increase of shadowing in your photos. The fungus eats into the glass causing permanent damage. You can buy a dehumidifying cabinet or make your own using a **Dampp Chaser**. Foxing is the blotching caused by mould on paper and it causes permanent damage to books, photos and documents. A dehumidified space will protect them.

Dry-Cycle and Dehumidifiers

To draw out moisture, you can use either air-conditioning or a compressor dehumidifier. Most modern air-conditioning systems allow you to select 'dry cycle'. This is drawing moisture out of your home without chilling the air, but a dehumidifier is far more efficient. Wet air is heavier than dry air, so the moisture is greater closer to the floor, whereas, air conditioning units are installed high on the wall; but a dehumidifier sits on the floor.



Figure 5. Ausclimate Dehumidifiers

Outdoor Cleaners



Moss, mould and lichen on steps, driveways and paths can be a dangerous slipping hazard. Pressure cleaners will give you an instant result but just one clean is equivalent to 7 years of normal wear and tear on the surface. The pressure cleaner will pit the surface wearing away sand and creating more surface area for more mould to grow, so the problem just gets worse each time you blast the concrete. Wet and Forget will kill the mould but it doesn't instantly disappear.

The mould and it's spores are dead within 12 hours, but will wear away as the rain beats against it or as you walk or drive on the surface. Wet and Forget also contains surfactants which will assist to inhibit the regrowth of mould for about a year. It can be used on most outdoor surfaces including rock, brick, stone, timber, shade sails, paint, metal, solar panels and rooves. As it is pH neutral it will not corrode metal or damage the colour in paint or fabric.

Water cooler air conditioning systems are unsuitable and should only be used in cool climate areas with low humidity. We recommend **Ausclimate Compressor Dehumidifiers** as they are extremely reliable, well priced and have been voted #1 by *Choice*, the Australian Consumer Magazine.

"If mould is the problem, Enviromart has the solution"

Enviromart Australia is an agent for

- Wet & Forget
- Environmental Air Solutions
- My Habitat Mould Master
- Shady Grove
- Damp Chaser
- Ausclimate
- Silica gel

