

Live Christmas tree brings scent, mold

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Live Christmas trees may bring more than a fresh evergreen scent to U.S. homes during the holidays, they may bring allergy symptoms, a study showed.

The study examined the relationship between mold growth on live Christmas trees and poor indoor air quality, WebMD.com reported.

"As mold growth is common in the area surrounding outdoor foliage, we hypothesized that the presence of a live Christmas tree may be contributing to indoor mold," said researcher John Santilli, a mold specialist practicing in Connecticut.

Researchers measured mold counts during a two-week period in a home with a live Christmas tree. For the first three days, counts remained at 800 spores per cubic meter of air, slightly above normal. It rose to 5,000 spores per cubic meter by day 14, when the tree was removed.

"Our study demonstrates that a live Christmas tree can be a significant source of mold spores," Santilli said. He recommended families with allergies, particularly mold allergies, keep live Christmas tree for only a few days at most.

The study was presented recently at The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Annual Scientific Meeting in Dallas.

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