

## Black Specks on Leaves, Curtains, etc.

Occasionally, black specks (round or flattened balls about 1/16 inch or less in diameter and dark brown to black) are found on the leaves of indoor and outdoor plants and on walls, curtains, pots, pot stakes, etc. The fungus, known as *Sphaerobolus*, shoots these spore balls, which stick on impact. The fungus grows on decaying, woody substances, probably in contact with soil. In the house, *Sphaerobolus* is probably growing on or near the surface of the potting mix of a houseplant. Outdoors, there are many places where the fungus can grow. The fungus is not known to harm plants.

### Management

Where necessary, the specks usually can be peeled from surfaces and placed in the garbage. Be careful not to damage plant or other delicate surfaces. To attempt to get rid of the fungus at its source, carefully remove the upper ¼ to ½ inch of potting mix and place in the garbage. Do not damage the roots or other plant parts. Replace with fresh potting mix. This technique may not be effective because of incomplete removal of the upper layer, smallness of the fungus, etc.

