

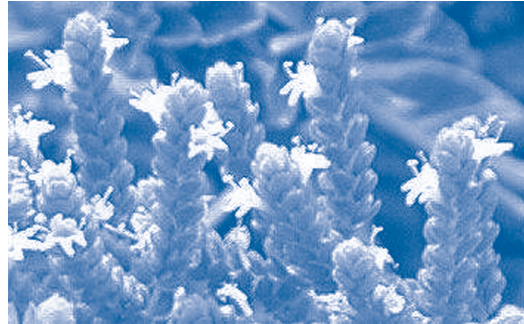
BIBLICAL MOLD REMEDIATION

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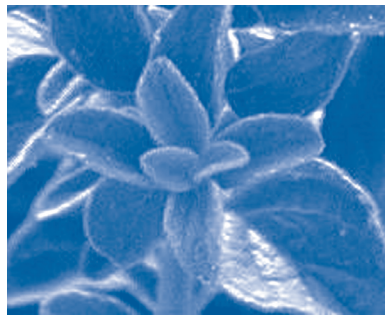
Several years ago I attended several different courses and seminars on mold to gain certification as a mold remediator. With all the new research and technology, it felt as if man had just recently discovered mold, recognized its problems for us, and invented ways to deal with it. Luckily for me, several different presenters brought me back to earth with the recollection that as long as nature has been recycling organic matter, mold remediation has been around.

The reference was made to Leviticus, Chapter 14, verses 33-53 in The Holy Bible, where the LORD instructs Moses and Aaron on how to deal with mold on the walls of their houses. The priest would be called in to inspect the house. He would tell them to empty the contents prior to his inspection to prevent cross contamination. If the priest found the mold had penetrated deeper than the surface of the walls, he would have the house closed for seven days, then inspect again to determine if the mold had spread. If the mold had spread, the contaminated plaster and stones in the wall would be removed and sent to the defiled area outside of town, then replaced with new stones and fresh plaster. The priest would then return for another inspection. If he found the mold had returned, he would condemn the house, order its demolition and have all materials sent to the defiled area outside of town. Anyone who had been in the house while it was closed would be considered to be contaminated until evening and would be required to bathe and wash their clothes. If the inspection after the demolition and repair found no mold had returned, the priest would declare the house to be clean. (*Sounds a lot like modern-day mold remediation protocols!*)

At this point the priest would perform a purification ceremony at the house. He would get two birds, a cedar wood stick, a piece of red yarn, and a branch of the hyssop plant. He would kill one of the birds over a clay pot containing fresh spring water so the blood would drain into the pot. Next, he would dip the cedar, the hyssop branch, the yarn, and the other bird into the mixture, then sprinkle the house seven times with the mixture. The house would be declared to be completely clean and the bird would be released to fly away, ending the ceremony.



The hyssop plant mentioned in the Bible.



I was very curious about the ceremony itself and its value in terms of mold remediation as we know it today. My first searches in the internet were unproductive, especially about the hyssop plant. The hyssop plant you would buy at the plant shop today was not native to that region and did not seem to have useful properties in mold remediation. I kept digging though, and found several articles that pointed out the hyssop plant today is only a part of a family of plants that were called hyssop in biblical times. The biblical

hyssop was most commonly a Syrian hyssop, *Origanum syriacum*, a shrubby member of the mint family, closely related to oregano (*like on your pizza!*). This plant has been shown to possess strong antibacterial properties and is found in many herbal medicines. In fact, there are references to its presence and use in the mixture placed on the Hebrew homes during the Passover event. The branch was also ideal for holding the yarn and was often used to sprinkle liquids finely and evenly. Other biblical refer-

ences mention the use of hyssop to transfer and deliver liquids.

Why the cedar stick, why the red yarn, and why the birds? The cedar stick is also considered herbal and medicinal in many alternative medicines and disinfectants. Likewise, the substance used to dye the red yarn may have possessed antimicrobial properties such as iodine. The first bird's blood, mixed with the fresh spring water would have provided a solution to deliver the antimicrobial elements as well as creating a permanent stain to mark the treated areas. Dipping the surviving bird in the mixture and releasing him almost certainly resulted in a "fluttered" sprinkling of the solution as the bird "dried" his wings in order to fly away!

Think about it. We are not only reading about the elements of inspection, penetration, containment, demolition, removal, cleaning, repair, and post inspection in mold remediation, we also have been reading about disinfection and antimicrobial application in the Bible! I guess the old remedies were smarter than I thought!

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