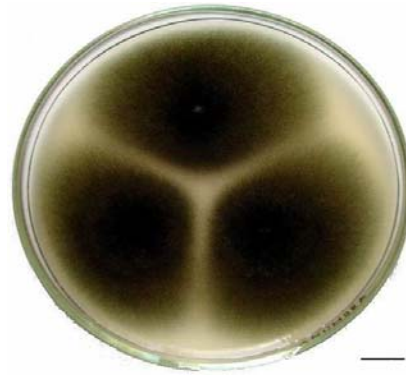


# ***Mold of the Month September 2005***

## ***Alternaria sp.***



*Alternaria sp. conidia in chains*



*Colonies of Alternaria sp.*

### **Colony Description**

*Alternaria sp.* colonies grow rapidly, producing colonies with flat, downy to woolly surface texture covered by grayish, short, aerial hyphae. The surface is grayish white at the beginning which later becomes greenish black or olive brown with a light border. The reverse side is brown to black.

### **Microscopic Morphology**

Conidiophores are erect, simple, sometimes branched, short or elongated, producing branched chains of multicelled conidia. Conidia are large and brown, with both transverse and longitudinal septation, often with a short conical or cylindrical beak, pale brown, smooth-walled or verrucose.

### **Ecology**

The genus contains 44 species, *A. alternate* is the most common of these. *Alternaria sp.* is found in soil, on seeds, dead organic debris, plants, food stuffs, textiles, carpets, window frames and other surfaces in building interiors. Commonly found in outdoor samples.

### **Clinical significance:**

*Alternaria* species are important airborne allergens and common agents for hay fever, asthma, and other allergy related symptoms. Toxic metabolites (that may cause disease in humans) produced by these microbes include alternariol monomethylether, tenuazonic acid, and altertoxins. Susceptible individuals most frequently affected are immunocompromised. Chronic cases may develop pulmonary emphysema, edema and bronchiopneumonia.