



## Being Clean Is Not Just Eye Candy

by Kenneth Bolsch

**T**here is an ongoing problem with mold and mildew stains on roofs and other surfaces, but the problem doesn't end there. Other existing problems are contaminants, such as oil, anti-freeze/coolant, brake fluids, etc.

The problem of mold and mildew occurs in all areas of the country, even in very dry climates. The problem is magnified many times over in areas, such as South Florida, where temperature and humidity levels consistently soar. High temperatures and humidity levels allow mold and mildew to grow at an alarmingly fast rate.

The scientific name for the cause of this problem is gloeocapsa magma algae. The algae are deposited on both horizontal and vertical surfaces by

the wind and by wildlife. The black stain is actually dead cells of the algae.

The first reaction to the problem is visual with the dead cells leaving a very ugly black stain on roofs, sidewalks, patios, and driveways—along with many other surfaces. It does seem that the algae are able to obtain a better “foot-hold” on masonry surfaces. However, no surface is left unaffected.

The “stain” problem is only the tip of the iceberg. Mold and mildew are environmental irritants that can multiply and spread throughout the body when inhaled. They pose health risks to people with pre-existing lung conditions, hypersensitivity disorders, and to those who have compromised immune systems, such as the elderly and infants.

What can happen if exposed to algae? These spores can cause typical allergic reactions, such as congestion, sneezing, coughing, and itching, watery eyes. Also, when these algae are in direct contact with the skin, they can cause irritations,

hives, rashes, and eczema which can lead to bacterial and/or viral infections. Inhalation of these spores can cause bronchial spasms which can lead to wheezing, chronic coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and even severe asthma attacks. Frequent contact with the irritants can cause neurological problems if these infections invade the bloodstream. Most HOAs and management companies are unaware of or do not realize the extent of harm these spores can produce.

The solution to this ongoing problem is simple. Keep your surroundings clean. Historically the cleaning process involved harsh chemicals, such as bleach; vigorous scrubbing; and cold water. Very physical! With the advent of power washers, the chore became easier but still very labor intensive and the use of harsh chemicals prevailed. To this day, most power washing companies continue to use this outdated technology that is still labor intensive and harmful to our ecosystem.

There are a few companies nationwide that are on the cutting edge of technology and are aware of the harm these chemicals produce and, hence, do not use them. The final product does not adversely suffer; conversely, results are better. Their “secret” is HOT water—200 plus degrees. NO chemicals! Hot water kills the spores on contact and they are washed away. The leading edge companies even recover these dead spores with a water recovery system so that even the dead spores do not go back into the ecosystem. Also, the water that is recovered—up to 98 percent—is filtered and re-used. Therefore, nothing harmful returns into the ecosystem, such as dead spores or chemicals, and they save on water usage. When this state-of-the-art equipment is properly utilized, the property looks brand new and is healthy. Also, looking at it from a HOA or manager’s point of view, the project costs less to clean because of the sheer speed of the new technology. There are no more guns and wands—that’s caveman technology! Hot water and surface cleaners that rotate at 2,000 rpm can clean up to 20 times faster than the old technology while doing the job with cleaner, neater, and more complete results in a fraction of the time. It also saves money because instead of a project lasting weeks, many can be completed in days. It has also been reported that using hot water will clean the surface better and cleanings



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will last up to three times longer than those that used cold water technology. Also, the problem of chewing gum and rust stains; they are removed perfectly, leaving no trace and no damage to the surface.

Unfortunately, there is no long-term solution to cure this problem of algae and the stains it leaves. Until science discovers a solution, we are forced to continue to clean on an ongoing basis. But we have made momentous strides to cut the cost and extend the life of the cleaning.

On another front of an equal, if not a more important subject is environmental cleaning and recovery. We must all be aware of the problems associated with the advances mankind has made within the last century and rectify them. Most notable of the problems are the internal combustion/diesel engines. These engines have made life so much better and opened up new horizons. Unfortunately, there is a major downside to their use: their negative environmental impact, the residual effects, and residue, such as grease, oil, anti-freeze/coolant, brake fluid, etc. You see these problems as dark spots and puddles on roadways, parking garages, and driveways (anywhere a gas/diesel powered vehicle can go).

The old standard of cleaning up this problem was washing (either with power or without) with the use of cold water and harsh chemicals (not an eco-friendly method!) So, in trying to cure one problem, we created another. The contaminated waste water with the petroleum

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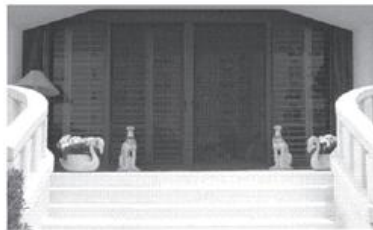
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by-products and harsh chemicals runs off into gutters and storm drains or into the soil which eventually reaches the aquifers where we get our drinking water. Some trade-off!

The newest enhanced technology employs hot water and environmental-friendly cleaning solutions and a seven-stage waste water carbon filtration system that recovers, filters, and cleans the wash water and re-uses up to 98 percent of that same water, drastically reducing the amount of water used. There is no residual runoff! All contamination is captured and recovered using these state-of-the-art systems. Even with the smallest system, it is a savings of 2,000 gallons per day and with larger systems saving 10 times that amount.

Most people presume this new technology is very costly,

but this is not the case! The speed and efficiency of these units are extraordinary. They produce the largest volume of finished product in the industry. An experienced technician can produce results 10 to 20 times the volume per day over the gun and wand technology and achieve much better results. Couple these results with the recovery of the contaminants and you have a system that follows the guidelines of the "Everglades Restoration Act" along with the EPA and DEP requirements. Wal-Mart, the leader in corporate "Green Technology," requires all their facilities to be cleaned and recovered in this fashion.

The Graycliff, a high-end catering facility had a combination of the above mentioned problems. The "dirty" look from the algae, the stains in their parking garage, and their town's "Green" supervisor regulating the use of cleaning agents were the Graycliff's "problems." They were losing business because of their appearance. In addition, the project had to be done after business hours so as not to interrupt the daily flow of customers. The project was completed in three nights without any disruption to business. It was done to the complete satisfaction of the town environmental supervisor, done under budget, and now looks like a new facility with new customers raving about the appearance.

The proprietor, Tony Pappamarkos, raved, "I couldn't be happier with the results! Business is booming again and the investment to clean the property and facility is small compared to the results I have in my bottom line. I will have this done on an ongoing basis. Really, the results are amazing!"

*Kenneth Bolsch is owner of Green Earth Powerwashing and Recovery in Delray Beach. For more information, visit [www.greenearthpowerwash.com](http://www.greenearthpowerwash.com).* ■



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