

Bird's Nest Fungus on mulch

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FIG. 1

Scientific Name: *Cyathus olla* Batc

Biological Roles

- Bird's nest fungi are saprophytes and thus are decomposers of organic material
- Bird's nest fungi help recycle nutrients

Period of Primary Occurrence: early through mid-summer

Identifying Characteristics

- Resemble small bird's nests with eggs
- Spores are spread by rainfall
- The fruiting bodies form tiny, ¼" diameter, cuplike nests
- Each cuplike nest contains minute flattened spheres resembling eggs in a bird's nest
- Egg-like structures within each "cup" are small capsules known as peridioles which contain the spores (reproductive units)
- Peridioles are lens-shaped, shiny white, black-grey or dark brown in color
- Before breaking open, tops of cuplike structures (known as a sporocarp) are covered with a cream to buff-brown membranous lid (Fig. 4)
- The cuplike structure (known as a sporocarp) serves as splash cups during heavy rains when spores are projected/dispersed into the air up to 3 feet
- The sticky spore cases adhere to plant foliage (Fig. 6-8)
- The sticky spore cases adhere to other surfaces, including houses, cars, home siding, patio furniture and even low-lying landscape lighting fixtures (Fig. 5)
- Bird's nest fungi are not conspicuous and are easily overlooked by gardeners
- Often found in decaying mulch

Control

- None required since these fungi live only on decaying plant matter and do not harm living plants



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6



FIG. 7



FIG. 8

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Always remember to read and heed six of the most important words on the label:
"KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN"

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