



Bird's Nest Fungi

Bird's nest fungi are fascinating mushrooms that obtain their nutrients from decomposing organic matter. These saprophytic fungi are commonly found in garden beds and mainly grow on mulch, leaf litter and other decomposing plant debris. Bird's nest fungi are nonpathogenic, thus do not harm plants and animals.

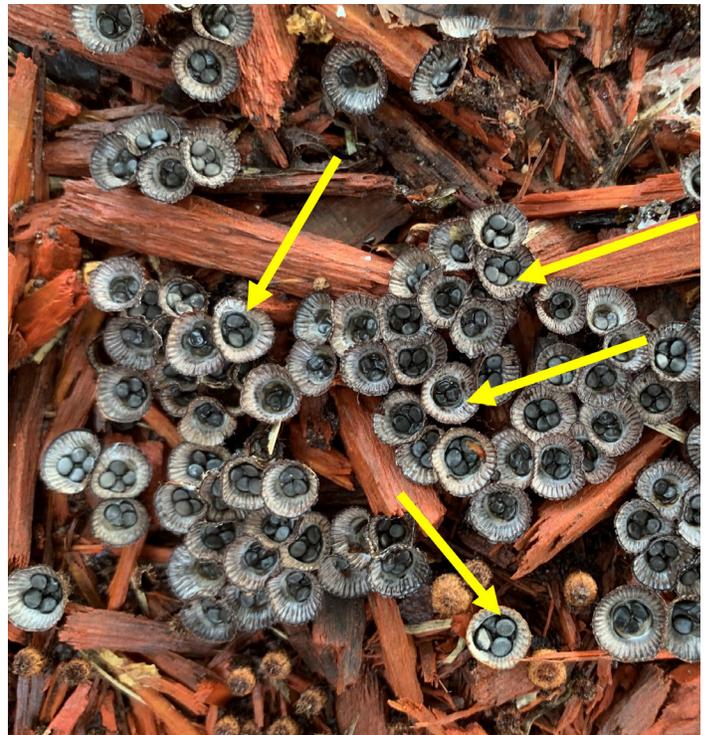
Bird's nest fungi are members of fungal division Basidiomycota (higher fungi) and belong to family Nidulariaceae ("nidulus" meaning small nest). These fungi received their common name based on the cup-shaped fruiting body appearance that resembles a small bird's nest filled with tiny eggs. The nest is called peridium and the

eggs are known as peridioles. The nest attaches itself to a substrate via means of fungal strands known as mycelium.

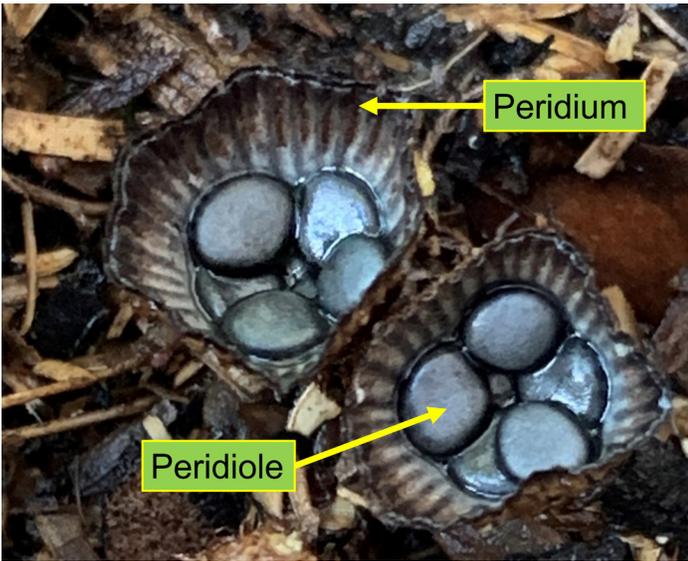
Bird's nest fungi are cosmopolitan and there are five genera including, *Crucibulum*, *Cyathus*, *Mycocalia*, *Nidula* and *Nidularia*. Of these five genera, *Cyathus* and *Crucibulum* are more common in the southeast United States. Bird's nest fungi thrive well under damp, shady locations. The fungus has a unique way of dispersal. When a waterdrop from sprinkler irrigation or a raindrop hits the nest (peridium), the eggs (peridioles) splash upwards from the nest and may disperse up to 1 meter (39 inches) before landing or attaching on a new site or substrate.



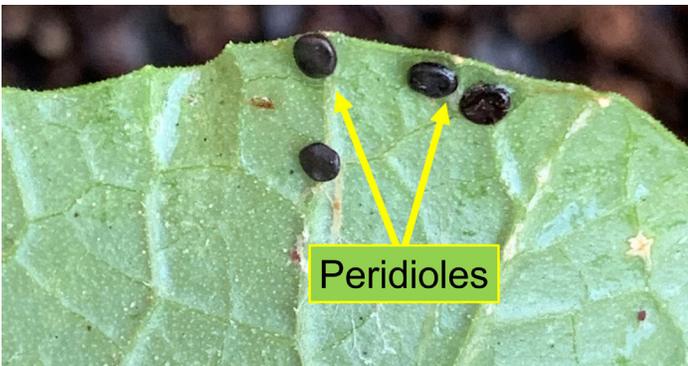
Immature fruiting bodies of *Cyathus* sp.



Partially opened fruiting bodies of *Cyathus* sp.



Mature cup shaped (peridium) fruiting bodies with tiny black eggs (peridioles) of *Cyathus* sp.



The tiny black eggs, or peridioles, of *Cyathus* sp. attached to underside of a leaf after dispersal.

Although bird's nest fungi decompose organic matter and are harmless to plants and animals, they can be a nuisance. The peridioles are quite adhesive to the substrate and removing these from the exterior of walls



The size of mature fruiting bodies of *Cyathus* sp. as compared to a dime.

or automobiles can be challenging. Management of bird's nest fungus is not required, but heavy infestations can be managed by raking or removing the infested substrate such as mulch.

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