
Xerophiles
hung out to dry
life in the extremes
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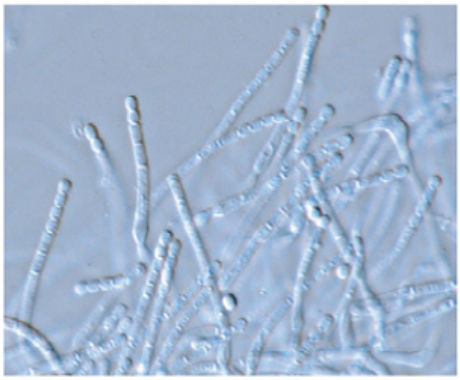

Wallemia sebi is a mold that grows in settings with little water such as dried fruits, salted meats, and salterns (the evaporitic beds where sea salt is produced).

EXTREME ABILITY Xerophiles can grow and reproduce in conditions with little water available. This group of organisms is named from the Greek words *xeros* meaning "dry," and *philos* meaning "loving."

EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS Some xerophiles live in pretty normal places like old food (nuts and jam especially), but others thrive in harsher conditions. Xerophiles can live in deserts and salt beds where most living creatures would dehydrate quickly!

EXTREME EXAMPLES Many mold and yeast species are xerophilic. Mold growth on bread is an example of food spoilage by xerophilic organisms. Xerophiles commonly live on food that has been dried for storage outside of the refrigerator.

Photo Credit: Atacama Desert, Chile is the world's driest desert - NASA (front); *Wallemia sebi* - Kathie Hodge, Cornell (back). For more information visit http://astrobiology.nasa.gov/