

Whiskey fungus

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In news— A local court in the USA has recently stopped the construction of a new barrel warehouse for Jack Daniel's, the world's biggest-selling brand of American whiskey as whiskey fungus has spread uncontrollably.

What is Whiskey fungus?

- When whiskey or any other spirit is kept inside a cask for maturing, a small amount of it evaporates into the atmosphere through the wood. Up to two per cent of the alcohol leaves the cask this way every year.
- This whiskey that evaporates into the air and perfumes the storehouse was dubbed the angel's share in mediaeval Ireland and Scotland.
- They believed the whiskey that disappeared into the air was meant as an offering for the angels.
- **Whiskey fungus, or *Baudoinia compniacensis*, feeds on these alcoholic vapours and is velvety or crust-like** – it can reach one or two centimetres in thickness.
- **The fungus tends to spread to nearby surfaces, blanketing almost everything that comes in its way.**
- **It is found across North America, Europe and Asia and thrives where fermentation occurs, like in bakeries and distilleries.**
- ***Baudoinia compniacensis* uses the ethanolic vapour to initiate germination and to express proteins in the fungus** that allow the fungus to tolerate high temperatures.
- **It was first discovered in the 1870s**, when Antonin Baudoin, the director of the French Distillers' Association, saw a "plague of soot" around the distilleries in the Cognac region of France.
- Researchers haven't found any instances of health risks

from short or long-term exposure to the whiskey fungus yet. However, it can destroy trees and damage properties.

- Moreover, removing the fungus from the affected surfaces might prove to be a daunting task.