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PERSONAL BRIEFING

Friday, February 12, 1999

Section: FEATURES MAGAZINE / HOME & DESIGN

Page: E03

By Marc Schogol

TEXT:

FUNGUS AMONG US

* Shortness of breath, headaches, not feeling quite right, difficulty concentrating, feeling easily fatigued. If your house has been water-damaged or has hidden leaks, the cause of these symptoms may be the fungus *Stachybotrys chartarum*. If so, get professional advice and help to clean up and correct the problem, says Berlin Nelson, a professor at North Dakota State University and a member of the American Phytopathological Society.

A SMOG ATTITUDE

* More sick-home truths: Smog, it appears, discriminates. A California Air Resources Board study found that while both boys and girls suffer from common air pollutants, boys were likelier to be affected by high levels of ozone gas while girls were more affected by high levels of particle pollutants like dust.

CLEAN AND SHOWERED

* If your shower has slowed to a trickle, here's a tip from The Maids maid service: Remove mineral deposit clogs from metal shower heads by boiling the head with 1/2 cup white vinegar and one quart of water for five minutes. Unclog plastic shower heads by soaking in a hot water and vinegar mixture.

FEATHERING THEIR NEST

* You wouldn't want to live in a house that was cold, wet, full of cracks and in danger of collapsing. But you expect birds to. Well, now there's an alternative to the standard wooden birdhouse: Thermal-Nest Designer Birdhouses. For information, call 972-416-5202.

THE ENGLISH PATIENCE

* When invited to an English house party, please remember that the days of valets and lady's maids are long gone. So, Town and Country magazine says, ``be ready to put away your own clothes. Just remember not to disturb the overflow linens, old board games and loose bits of wood in the dresser drawers."

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