

To the unexperienced eye, Zena may look like a German Shepherd.

But actually she is a Belgian Malinois (pronounced MAL-in-wah).

More importantly, she is a working dog with a unique resume — one of only 20 dog's nationwide with the mission of detecting toxic mold.

Together, Zena and her handler, Paul Collins of Port Angeles, make up Enviro-Clean Northwest — the only canine mold-detection system in the Pacific Northwest.



Many people needlessly suffer from allergies, when what they don't realize is that what they are really allergic to is mold hidden in their homes.

Often times, mold is quite visible to the naked human eye and easily detected.

However, much of the toxic mold in homes and buildings is invisible — growing in wall cavities — and canines are the only effective way to actually find such hidden toxic mold.

That's where Zena comes in to do her job.

Dogs smell 10,000 times better than humans — thus enabling them to detect scents long before a human even knows they are around.

The human nose has 5 million scent recep-

Don't let your home be taken over by MOLD

tors, while a dog has 200 million.

Zena is certified in the detection of 27 different types of toxic mold.

If you notice mold or know of water-damaged areas in your home, it is time to take action to control its growth

A healthy person may experience skin rash, runny nose, eye irritation, cough, congestion and just general health aggravation.

Someone with allergies or asthma will suffer these same symptoms but on a much grander scale.

If you have an immune deficiency or underlying lung disease, you will be at an increased risk for infections from these molds.

When a variety of toxic molds are present, they actually defend against each other causing bacterium called mycotoxins.

Depending on the exposure level these mycotoxins may cause toxic effects also; symptoms are nausea, headaches, respiratory and

eye irritation.

Common places to find toxic mold are in areas where water has damaged building materials and furnishings, perhaps from flooding or plumbing leaks.

Toxic mold can also be found growing along walls where warm moist air condenses on cooler wall surfaces, such as inside cold exterior walls, behind dressers, headboards, and in closets where articles are stored against walls.

"Dogs are not susceptible to toxic mold. With early detection, there will be no harm to the dog or to the residents of the buildings we will be inspecting," Paul says.

When toxic mold is detected by Zena, Paul takes a sample and ships it to a toxicology laboratory here in Washington to determine exactly what kind of mold it is.

There are many factors to consider, Paul stresses, in how to respond to the mold, depending upon the type it is and where it's located.

The solution might be as simple as working with contractors to spray the molded area with a specialized solution.

However, it could be necessary to open up walls and remove the molded wood or to use the services of a mold remediator.

But first: identify the mold.

Call the nose that knows.

Call 360-670-4595.

(All of Zena's call are automatically forwarded to Paul.)



Paul Collins and Zena make up Enviro-Clean Northwest — the only canine mold-detection system in the Pacific Northwest.