



Clearance of aquatic hyphomycete spores by a benthic suspension feeder

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ABSTRACT: We placed individual *Elliptio complanata* in aerated suspensions of conidia (asexual spores) of aquatic hyphomycetes (Fungi). Mussels actively ingested conidia at an initial rate of over 20,000 h⁻¹. The conidia of the seven most common species were removed at different rates, but there was no consistent correlation between conidial size or shape (tetradiate, sigmoid, or clove shaped) and removal by *E. complanata*. At the maximum clearance rate, animals ingested the equivalent of 159 ng conidial biomass h⁻¹, corresponding to 4.7 μg d⁻¹ g⁻¹ animal dry mass. At natural densities, *E. complanata* may be able to eliminate a considerable proportion of the conidial production, causing a shift in the proportions of species in the remaining conidia.

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