A list of advantages of this apparatus would be headed by the fact that it can be constructed from the simplest of laboratory equipment. Also, in contrast to the original design, no special tooling is required and no dimensions can be termed critical. The use of all flexible joints eliminates breakage, and the short overall length of the delivery tube makes delivery volumes more accurate and less difficult to obtain.

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SLIME FLUX OF MESQUITE AS A NEW SAPROPHYTIC SOURCE OF CRYPTOCOCCUS NEOFORMANS

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A number of the fungi that are able to cause disease in man and animals have been found to have a saprophytic existence in nature. Several, including Cryptococcus neoformans, have been isolated from soil, and Emmons (Am. J. Hyg. 62:227, 1955) and others have shown that the frequency of isolation of this yeast is greatly increased if the samples are collected from areas in which contamination with avian droppings occurs. Emmons was the first to report the occurrence of C. neoformans in old pigeon nests, but he was unable to explain the association, since the pigeons did not apparently harbor the organism. Occasionally, this yeast has been noted in other nonliving habitats. Sanfelice (Ann. Igieno Sperimentale 4:463, 1895) found it in fermenting fruit juice, and Klein (J. Hyg. 1:78, 1901) and Carter and Young (J. Pathol. Bacteriol. 62:271, 1950) reported its occurrence in milk from healthy cows. Vanbreuseghem (Mycoses of Man and Animals, Pitman, London, 1958, p. 187) added "wasps nests, grass, the bodies of insects, butter and canned milk" to this list.

The occurrence of C. neoformans in slime flux has not been previously reported, although this substrate has, from time to time, been the subject of microbiological investigation. The findings recorded here were noted in the course of a study of the slime flux of desert plants, including saguaro (Cereus giganteus), mesquite (Prosopis juliflora), cottonwood (Populus fremontii), and oak (Quercus oblongifolia). All of the yeasts encountered in cultures of this substance were isolated in pure culture, characterized morphologically and physiologically by the methods of Wickerham (U.S. Dept. Agr. Tech. Bull. 1029, 1951), and identified by means of the taxonomic treatise of Lodder and Kreger van Rij (The Yeasts: A Taxonomic Study, North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1952). In the case of the yeast C. neoformans, the organism was also tested for ability to grow at a temperature of 37°C, for urease activity, and for the ability to produce starch. None of the relatively few molds observed was a species considered to be pathogenic, but the yeast C. neoformans was encountered in 9 of the 20 samples of exudate from mesquite and not from that of any other desert plant examined. The frequency of the occurrence of this organism would appear to be significant from the public health point of view. Further ecological studies as well as an investigation of the virulence of the strains are in progress.