Molds

Molds will grow on almost any organic source if the humidity is high enough. Molds are created by filamentous fungi that are omnipresent in the environment. Each specie has different preferences for certain types of organic food sources, ranging from wood to plant debris.

Saprophytic:

Eazy plug material is no different from organic matter, so if molds would occur they are most likely saprophytic. This means that they feed on dead plant material and are not pathogenic or harmful to plant life or people.

How does mold arise:

The combination of nutrients, moisture and temperature favor mold formation.

- during storage or shipping: when storage temperatures are high in the summer, moisture can collect between product and packaging and can cause mold to sporulate or develop
- during cultivation: the presence of spores in air, growing media or hardware can lead to developing micro-organisms when combined with excessive moisture and warm temperatures

Beneficial effects:

Some saprophytic organisms are beneficial for plant growth, like the Trichoderma species frequently found. Other species like Penicillium and Aspergillus decompose organic matter, releasing mineral nutrients for plant uptake. All saprophytic molds will contribute to good microbial diversity in the growing medium, this way limiting the occurrence of plant pathogens.

Adverse effects:

In real severe cases, molds can colonize the surface of a growing medium too abundant and form a layer on the surface that limits water penetration.

Effects:

Exposure to fresh air will already inhibit the microbial development by drying it out and the oxygen will shut down micro-organisms that create the odors. If there is some odor, it will dissipate over time.

Treatment:

Molds can be controlled by:

- reduce irrigations
- increase air flow
- fresh air to inhibit the microbial development by drying it out and oxygen to shut down micro-organisms that create the odors
- apply fungicide such as Amylo-X from Certis (a biofungicide that is admitted to the US market as well - it is therefor well suitable for combatting fungicides that occur during cultivation)