

## News archive

2017

- ▶ [August 2017](#)
- ▶ [July 2017](#)
- ▶ [June 2017](#)
- ▶ [May 2017](#)
- ▶ [April 2017](#)
- ▶ [March 2017](#)
- ▶ [February 2017](#)
- ▶ [January 2017](#)

▶ [2016](#)

▶ [2015](#)

▶ [2014](#)

▶ [2013](#)

▶ [2012](#)

▶ [2011](#)

▶ [2010](#)

▶ [2009](#)

▶ [2008](#)

▶ [2007](#)

▶ [2006](#)

▶ [2005](#)

▶ [2004](#)

▶ [2003](#)

▶ [2002](#)

▶ [2001](#)

▶ [2000](#)

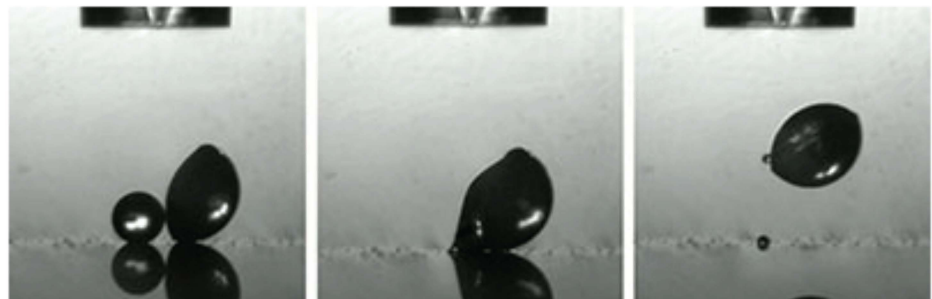
▶ [1999](#)

▶ [1998](#)

▶ [1997](#)

## Mushroom spores launched by 'catapult'

Aug 8, 2017 [1 comment](#)



Speedy spores: coalescing droplets disperse fungus spores

The ingenious way that mushrooms and certain other fungi fire spores into the atmosphere in order to reproduce has been mimicked by a team of engineers and fungal biologists. These organisms disperse billions or even trillions of spores so that enough land in a suitable environment for them to reproduce. However, the phylum *Basidiomycota* – which includes all mushrooms and numerous other fungi – has evolved an ingenious dispersal method that uses the energy released by coalescing water droplets to boost the chances of reproduction. By mimicking this "surface-tension catapult" in the lab, the researchers' work could inspire new approaches to dealing with destructive fungi or lead to artificial methods for dispersing tiny particles.

The basic details of how *Basidiomycota* launch spores were first worked out in the early 20th century, by the British–Canadian mycologist (fungal biologist) Arthur Henry Reginald Buller. He discovered that in the seconds before launch, the spore secretes chemicals that attract water so that two separate droplets grow on one side of the spore – a spherical "Buller's droplet" on a small projection at the base, and a larger, flatter "adaxial droplet" higher up.