



THE BLOB BIBLE

Authentic knowledge to tame
the secret nature of the blob

FOR THOSE (SLIGHTLY) ECCENTRIC FOLKS

WHO WANT TO TAKE A BLOB AT HOME

If you're reading this, it's probably because you're planning to adopt a blob or because you have a passion for reading unusual manifestos. In either case, the people around you will now have good reason to question your sanity.

This book brings together the seven foundational principles for maintaining a relationship of mutual appreciation with a blob.

If you succeed, you will join the very exclusive circle of blobologists.

But be warned: handling a blob is an art for the initiated. The authors of this book sincerely hope you will be able to quickly master these teachings; otherwise...

Also note that it is not impossible that an irresistible and unexplained thirst for inter-species communication—between humans and blobs—may emerge in your mind. This manual disclaims all liability for any side effects that may occur.

You alone are responsible for your curiosity.

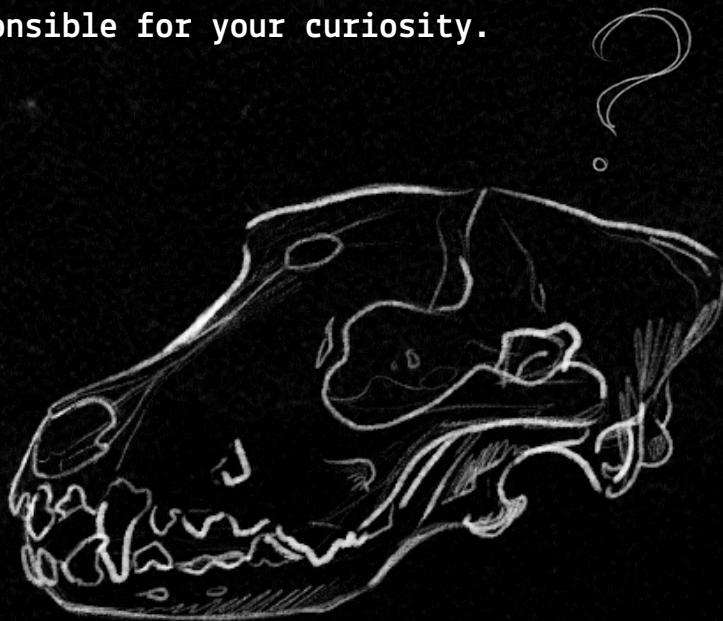


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These tips and experiments should be supervised by an adult.



THE PHYSARUM CASE

INVESTIGATION REPORT

Whether in the press or among its supporters, *Physarum polycephalum* is known as “the Blob” or “the Slime Mold” in English-language media. Shapeless, slimy, and of questionable origin, these pseudonyms describe it far better, in its own view, than its Latin name—which literally means “small multi-headed bladder”—and is undeniably less credible.

When it was first identified, while attempting to reproduce through sporulation, it was initially linked to the mushroom cartel. Investigations conducted in custody, however, quickly demonstrated that it ate like an animal and produced pigments like a plant. The forensic team has ruled, for the time being, that the individual would henceforth be classified among the myxomycetes, a phylogenetic group composed of slimy organisms that is still relatively unknown.

WHAT ARE ITS NETWORKS?

The simplicity of its unicellular organization and its tree-like network make it extremely competitive. It is estimated that its group has—for a long time now—widely colonized the planet, and the number of blob species worldwide is estimated at around 1,000. The total number of individuals, however, is not yet known to the authorities.

A MAFIA-STYLE REIGN

The origins of the Blob Cartel remain shrouded in mystery, but it is undoubtedly one of the oldest: it is estimated to date back 500 million years, or even 1 billion! This was long before the continents drifted apart, giving it a head start in its development and colonization.

PROFILE

Appearance: bright yellow

Cartel: The Myxomycetes

Size: from a few micrometers (μm) to 1.3 kilometers (km) max. observed

Top speed: 4 cm/h

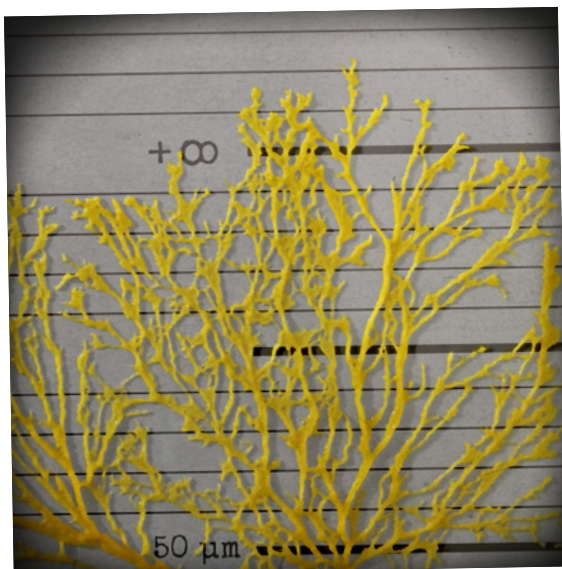
Morphology: tree-like networks

Sexual orientation: undefined (700 possibilities considered)

Strength: capable of coagulating in 2 seconds, bulletproof (empirical test graciously conducted by the Texas police in 1973)

Weakness: aversion to light

Psychological profile: greedy, calculating, a penchant for optimization, opportunistic.



0-001-54

BACKGROUND AND CHARGES

Bactericide and fungicide

Murder by phagocytosis (swallows its victims whole)

LIST OF VICTIMS

(Warning: the following photos may be disturbing to the uninitiated)



MODUS OPERANDI

Taking advantage of the twilight, it attacks victims who are generally slow-moving, leaving behind a characteristic mucus as its signature. The remains are so thoroughly digested by the killer that the resulting waste can be directly assimilated by plants and other unscrupulous fungi. A perfect crime...

DOES THE BLOB POSE A THREAT TO SOCIETY?

The scientific experts in charge of the case assert that a blob-like invasion seems unlikely. The reason: the amount of food the individual would need to find each day to reach a substantial size, despite its spectacular growth capacity. Despite its remarkable intelligence, it has not yet been proven that it can overcome its aversion to light or its inability to survive in non-humid environments. Also, in the suspect's defense, no cases of blobification have been reported so far.

Nevertheless, the committee acknowledges that daily interaction with the subject should be established in order to assess the potential fragility of the prognosis.

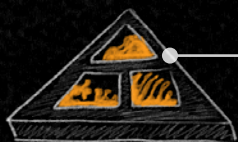
Here's your chance, the scientific committee is hiring!

Do you have what it takes to conduct a detailed physical and psychological study of the blob?

THE POCKET LAB

Did you accept the mission? Well done, your courage (or recklessness) is to your credit.

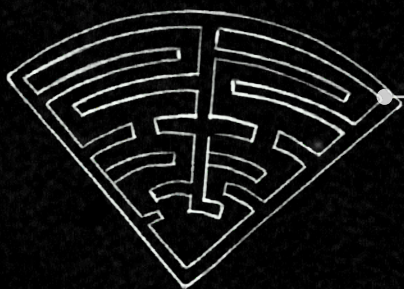
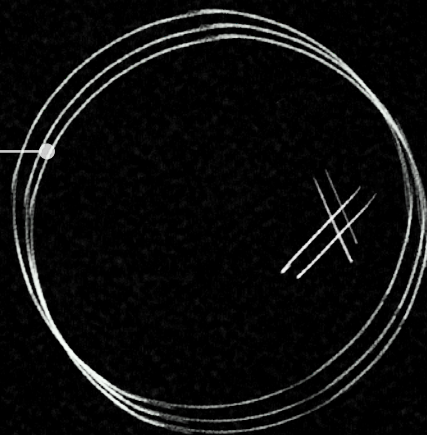
What's done is done. Now you'll have to gear up.



3 BLOB CLONE (DORMANT)

BLOB INCUBATOR

Also known as a "Petri dish" by unimaginative scientists



MAZE

More than just an orientation challenge, it's a personality test!

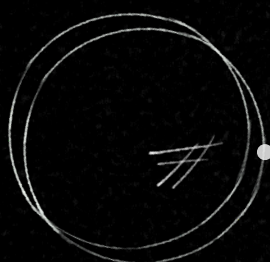
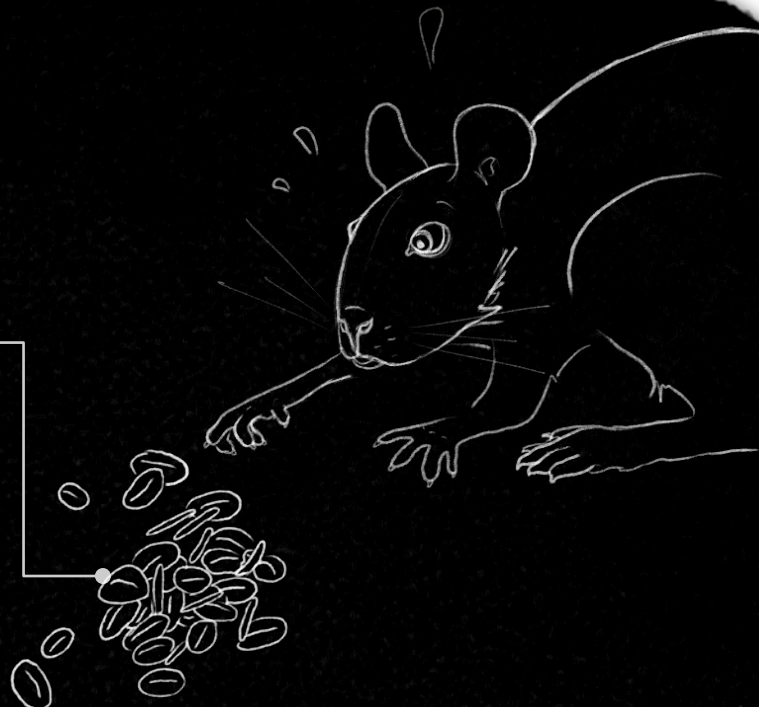
MATRIX POWDER

(Sunglasses not included)



GROWTH PARTICLES

Simply oat-standing!



REJUVENATION TANK

Becoming an old crust will make you feel young again!

SEQUENCING SPATULA

Even the best-equipped labs envy us for it

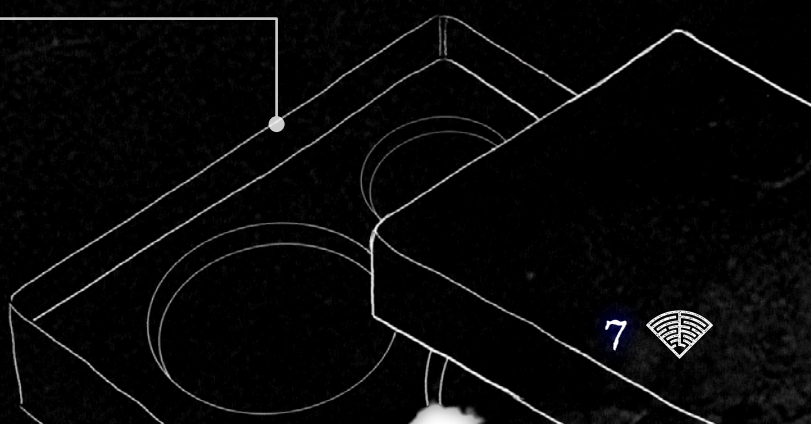


REGENERATION STAND

(Filter quality)

UV-PROTECTIVE SHELTER

For a stay on the dark side.



Warning: This kit is not recommended for young children as it contains small parts that may be swallowed.



1ST KNOWLEDGE

DECONTAMINATION MEASURES

Despite its criminal record, the blob is a vulnerable organism that's worth protecting: a good blobologist is a knowledgeable microbiologist.

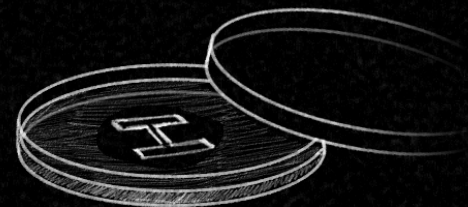
The air and objects around us contain bacteria and spores. Once these spores "hatch," they become fungi, also known as mold. These organisms, just like the blob, need only one thing to thrive: a damp spot... a blob matrix, for example.

While the blob readily feasts on certain bacteria and molds, there are others it fears. And rightly so, as some of them can parasitize it and make it sick.

So that your blob isn't disturbed in its home by UFOs (Uninvited Living Organisms), you must work with spotless instruments.



The rule is simple: anything that comes into contact with the agar or the blob must be sterilized.



☉ **If it's plastic** (like the incubator), disinfect with alcohol (ideally 70%).

☉ **If it's metal** (like tweezers, a spoon, or a cutting tool), alcohol works, but it's even more effective to pass the tools (without alcohol) over a flame.

A word of caution: avoid leaving the incubator open unnecessarily, especially when the agar is inside. This will prevent any unexpected airborne invasions ;-)

Is everything sparkling clean now? Okay, you're ready.



2ND KNOWLEDGE RECIPE FOR A COZY DEN

A UNIQUE MICROCOSM

In the wild, your blob would be moving about in the dim light of the undergrowth, likely hidden beneath the bark of an old, damp stump. In this idyllic setting, your intriguing friend would certainly be sheltered from the light—but also from your gaze. As the saying goes: out of sight, out of mind... not exactly a good start, then, for a human-blob relationship.

Scientists have long since found the solution to this problem. They place the blobs in small round boxes containing a transparent, moist matrix.

Learn how to make your own!

THE AUTHENTIC BLOB MATRIX

Gather the blob incubator and the matrix powder.

- 1 Fill the incubator to the brim with water, then pour the water into a bowl.
- 2 Add 0.5 grams of matrix powder—about half a scoop—to the water. Boil the mixture for about ten seconds. Any method is acceptable: microwave, cooking plate, campfire...

If you notice a sediment, mix in more matrix powder into the water.

- 3 Without delay, pour the still-very-hot mixture into the incubator. At this stage, it may reward you with a little “plop” sound. Note that this is completely normal and indicates how energetically the incubator is doing its job.

There you go—you did it without even burning your fingers? Too bad—that would have spiced up the process...

- 4 **Caution!** Don't get distracted. Close the incubator lid to prevent the airborne intruders mentioned two pages earlier. The incubator is closed; no spores are knocking from the inside? Then the hardest part is behind you.

- 5 Now let the box cool to room temperature for about 20 minutes; the agar will harden.

I'll let you flip the hourglass.



IN THE MEANTIME, DID YOU KNOW THAT...

... while those few minutes may seem like an eternity to you, the blob can lie dormant for 1 to 2 years as a sclerotium before coming back to life in a favorable environment (the one you're creating right now, in this case).

So, in your opinion, which one of you—you or him—is the more impatient?



WHAT IS AGAR POWDER MADE OF?

Agar powder is a very fine powder made from red algae native to Japan. It has the ability to absorb up to 250 times its weight in water, provided that the two are boiled together.

Luckily for you, matrix powder—also known as “agar agar”—despite its appearance as a rare and exotic ingredient, is now available in most grocery stores and supermarkets, in the baking aisle, often for a very low price.

Your grocer probably has no idea that what they’re selling—far more than just a cake gelling agent—is a haven for slime molds.

The last few grains are running out, the twenty minutes are up... You’ve passed this test of patience brilliantly! Now, it’s time for the test.

It’s time to check that the agar-agar has set properly.

THE GEL TEST

Option 1, for those of you who prefer a tactile approach: Using the flat back of a sanitized spoon, apply light pressure to check that the blob matrix has set properly.

Option 2, for the more cautious among you (and they’re right to be): You can simply tilt the incubator; the matrix should “hold its shape” without flowing or changing form. No opening the container, no contact with utensils: no risk of contamination.

If the matrix still hasn’t set and you’re sure you’ve been patient enough: go back to the beginning. Add a little agar-agar and bring the mixture to a boil again.



Avoid disaster by touching the walls of the incubator: they should be at room temperature because you’re putting a blob in there, not a tea bag...

Is your agar now nice and firm? Then let’s get down to business...



3RD KNOWLEDGE

WAKE THE CREATURE

The untapped potential of a being with extraordinary abilities lies in the palm of your hand.

It doesn't seem to be from our planet—and yet. Eager to meet it? To do so, you'll need to help it snap out of its lethargy. Dry and numb, it's waiting for just one thing: to be awakened.

Don't worry, you won't need a lingering kiss—a single drop of water is all it takes.



Your blob incubator is ready to welcome a little one. But which one? Inside your pocket lab, three candidates are dormant.

Choose one of them and set the other two aside in a dry container, protected from light. As you entrust them to the darkness, take the time to explain that you love them just as much as their selected clone sibling and that their turn will come.

Tip: Avoid any drama by holding a random draw, the “Eeny, meeny, miny, moe” method.

Have you put the whiners away? Proceed...

Armed with your disinfected tweezers, gently grab the chosen one and place it in the center of the matrix.

If it’s thick, you can moisten it with a drop of water to help it rehydrate. Be careful—the blob likes moisture, not swimming! To do it right, simply touch it to the condensation formed on the inside of the incubator lid, then place it on the matrix, wipe away the condensation with a clean paper towel, and... close the lid.

All bets are off now! We’d like to take this solemn moment to remind you that you alone are responsible for waking up this myxomycete with a criminal record. A little bifid arm should soon be poking out the tips of its pseudopods...

WELCOME GIFT

You can now demonstrate your peaceful intentions toward the blob by leaving a few offerings. What better way to do this than with a few growth particles? Place two or three of them on the matrix, but avoid putting them right in its face—that’s not pleasant for anyone.

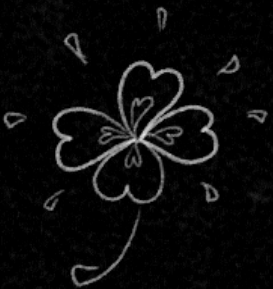
Observer’s tip: use your particles to form a small pile by placing them 1 or 2 cm away from the blob.

There you go—it’s that simple—you’ve just plotted... uh... planned your very first test for the blob: will it be able to find its food from a distance?

Even though the blob has no eyes, **it's still a master of navigation.**

One of its secret weapons? Smell! Sure, your blob has no nose, just like it has no eyes. However, its membrane is equipped with chemical receptors that allow it to detect a scent and locate its source. In other words, no need to call it to dinner—the sweet aroma tickling its receptors is enough to bring it to the table. Save your voice!

And because safety first...



To attract, with a simple gesture, good luck, longevity, and prosperity for your newborn: toss a growth particle over your shoulder. But just one! You'll need the others...

To make it feel right at home...

The blob prefers temperatures between 20 and 27°C, with 25°C being optimal for its growth.

Oh, right, I almost forgot. **Sunbathing for the blob? Not really his thing.**

He prefers the shade.

So just put him right back in the UV-protective shelter or in a closet. But don't worry—even though the blob doesn't care much for light, a quick 15-minute visit every now and then will surely make him happy.

During these visits, it will be helpful to learn how to read the blob's behavior and spot certain signs.

Find out how to conduct your first check-up!

4TH KNOWLEDGE FIRST AID KIT

The blob is an independent creature - and even though it would never admit it - it still needs you to pay it a quick visit every day.

While chatting with your host, pay close attention to its behavior and clues about its habitat.

With your keen eye, learn to spot and handle any minor issues that may arise.

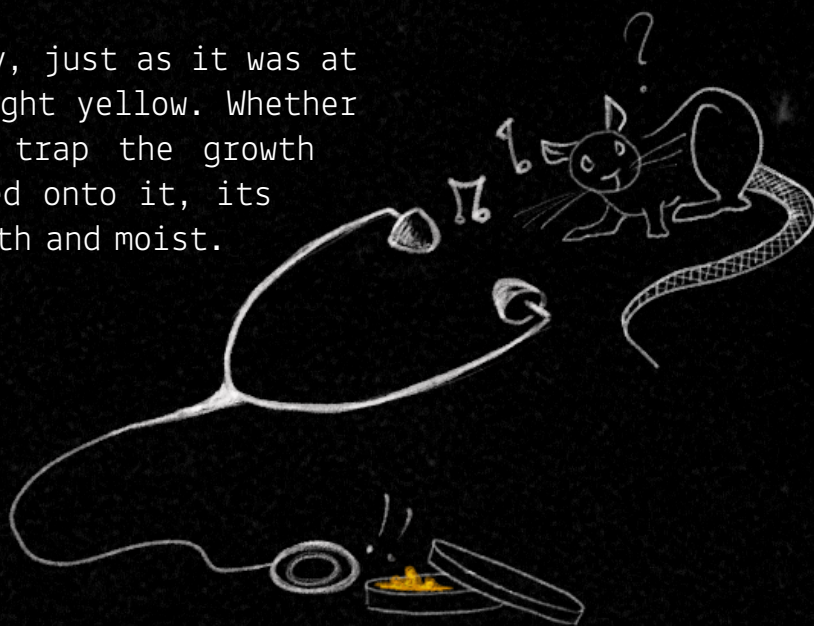
Take the oath and become Doctor Blob!



WHEN EVERYTHING IS GOING WELL

The matrix is clear and healthy, just as it was at the start, and the blob is bright yellow. Whether it has a tree-like shape to trap the growth particle or has already clumped onto it, its surface remains relatively smooth and moist.

The golden rule is the quality of the matrix: it must be changed every 2 to 3 days or as soon as any of the following symptoms appear.



SYMPTOMS THAT RAISE A RED FLAG

WHEN THE MATRIX IS ...

⊗ Opaque or has an unusual color

⊗ Slimy

⊗ Attacked by mold

DIAGNOSIS

The matrix is starting to spoil.

The blob has already explored its environment extensively and "marked" it with memory mucus; it's time to offer it new horizons.

Contamination from surrounding spores. This happens sometimes; take extra precautions during the next disinfection (1st knowledge).



A BLOB ...	DIAGNOSIS
☉ Clumpy in appearance or scattered in small clusters	Stress response: lack of food or expired agar.
☉ Orange (a symptom usually accompanied by slower movement, loss of appetite, and an increased risk of mold infestation)	Your blob is getting old.
☉ Grayish/greenish with a yellow ring around the edges	Your blob is probably dead, and pigments have leaked into the matrix. Various possible causes.
☉ Looks like it caught fire!? A "burnt" appearance consisting of a string of stalks topped with small black "seeds"	The blob has sporulated due to unfavorable conditions, most often a lack of food or too much light.

FIRST AID STEPS

- ☉ Change the matrix (see next page). If mold starts to grow, act quickly before it has time to spread.
- ☉ **If the blob is getting old**, put it into hibernation (6th knowledge) and then wake it up again (3rd knowledge). Reviving an old skin is as simple as that!
- ☉ **If the blob has died**, don't be too hard on yourself. Release your guilt by holding a small, intimate ceremony around the trash can to say your goodbyes. Once you've gotten over your grief, you can choose a new sclerotium to wake up.
- ☉ **If your blob has decided to transform into spores**, there's no turning back. Its genes aren't lost, but to create a new blob, its spores would need to meet those of another blob of the same species. The fusion takes place in an aquatic environment, but the procedure isn't covered in this book... for now.



Be tactful: even if the growth medium you provided the day before hasn't been fully consumed, offer it some more. The blob doesn't dig into its food; it only takes in the nutrients on the surface, which explains why you find leftovers.

HOW DO YOU CREATE A NEW MATRIX?

First, take a few moments to explain the procedure to your single-celled patient, disinfect your sequencing spatula, and then a small container. Since the blob has no nervous system, the procedure will be performed without anesthesia.

- 1 Assess the situation: identify the healthy parts of the blob that you will be harvesting. At your discretion, select the entire blob or just a portion of it.

Now that your diagnosis is made, operate!

- 2 With the sequencing spatula, make a clean cut with a confident stroke! Take this opportunity to note your test subject's exceptional clotting ability: not a single drop of cytoplasm or "blood" escapes!

- 3 Have you finished the area? Using the lever end of the sequencing spatula, gently lift the fragment and set it aside in the container. Cover it to protect it from UFOs (see: 1st knowledge).

- 4 Return to your incubator: discard the remains of the old agar, clean it with water, then with alcohol. Pour in a new matrix.

- 5 Once the incubator has reached room temperature, retrieve your patient and place them in the new incubator. Close the lid, and you're done. The procedure was a success—head to the waiting room to reassure the family.



A word on ethics: there's no need to manually "remove" the blob from its old matrix; this practice could cause it unnecessary harm. Instead, rely on its natural curiosity to encourage it to come down and explore its new territory on its own.



A VARIATION ON THE ANTHENTIC BLOB MATRIX

(ESPECIALLY FOR BREEDING)

When well-fed, a blob doubles in size every day, and that's exactly the point of this matrix! Thanks to it, you'll end up with a large, uniform blob that's very easy to cut into small, identical blob samples—perfect for starting your experiments.

The trick? In this matrix, the nutrients are mixed evenly. The blob then adapts its behavior: it no longer has any reason to form branching structures and spreads out evenly to cover as much surface area as possible.

PROTOCOL

- 1 In 200 ml of water, add 4 generous tablespoons of growth particles and 2 g of agar agar. (Generally speaking, for an matrix to be stable, it must contain at least 1% agar agar.)
- 2 Blend everything together with an immersion blender or a regular blender.
- 3 Bring the mixture to a boil; it will thicken. Add a little water, then bring it to a boil again. Repeat this step until the medium is liquid enough to spread out when you tap the incubator on the table. Be careful not to dilute it too much, though, or it won't be nutritious enough and the blob might give you a hard time.

TIPS

- ☉ Once the blob feast is over, you'll probably have some leftovers. Freeze them in an ice cube tray for later use. All you'll have to do is boil a cube to reactivate its gelling properties.
- ☉ Get a Tupperware container and, using this recipe, turn it into an intensive blob breeding unit. This ensures you always have a blob supply on hand and keeps the incubator available for your experiments. It's



also faster and more reliable than waking up new sclerotia each time.

© To manage the blob's rapid growth, feel free to remove half of it every time you change the agar. You can put the blob into dormancy (learn how in the 5th knowledge) or simply discard it. In the latter case, the blob will surely hold a grudge against you, but don't worry—tomorrow it will have forgotten all about it.

CAN THE BLOB INVADE MY HOUSE?

Unless you live in a home that's as hot and humid as a rainforest and as dark as the underside of a tree stump, there's no danger that you'll have to fend off a blob invasion.

While it may act up sometimes and make a quick getaway, it will only travel a few centimeters outside the incubator before realizing its mistake and rushing right back to its nest... I promise!



5TH KNOWLEDGE

MASTERY OF REGENERATION

Immortal, the blob seems to have struck a deal with Mother Nature.

But as in any good story, she granted this power to the blob on one non-negotiable condition:

« If, at the end of its three months, the blob does not feign apparent death by expelling all the water from its body, then it will die for good.

Nevertheless, if it obeys, not only will it be able to emerge from its dormancy to resume the course of its life, but all traces of aging will be erased. Then, it will be young and vigorous once again. »



HOW DOES NATURE PERFORM THIS MIRACLE?

The secret lies in the repair of harmful mutations.

Inside the cells of a living being—whether it's us or the blob—there are nuclei. The nuclei contain DNA that replicates every day. DNA is a long code of instructions that allows the body to function. Copies of this code are constantly being made, and because of its complexity, errors sometimes creep in during the copying process. With each replication, there is a risk that new errors will be added to the previous ones: these are mutations. Over time, these harmful mutations prevent the organism from functioning properly and lead to aging.

The human body has a few mechanisms to detect and sometimes correct some of these errors, but they are not effective enough, and death occurs sooner or later.

If the blob does not suffer the same fate as humans, it is due to its ability to dry out. By doing so, it allows its harmful mutations to be reset: everything is corrected and becomes fully functional again. How? The mystery remains unsolved for now. But it certainly captures the fascination and efforts of scientists trying to understand its mechanisms.

But here's the good news: even if you don't yet understand the inner workings, nothing is stopping you from putting the regeneration machine to work.

Turn the page and see how you can do it...

THE CONTRACT'S SMALL PRINT

If the blob is wise enough to alternate between active and dormant phases, it becomes immortal. But beware: this immortality only protects against so-called "biological" death.

For while it no longer fears the passage of time, the blob remains a fallible being. Predators, accidents, and diseases will put an end to its immortality just as effectively as they do for ordinary mortals.





PUTTING HIBERNATUS TO SLEEP



REQUIREMENTS

Have a well-developed blob:
let it grow in the incubator.
Once it covers half or more of
the available surface area, it
will be ready for harvesting.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- ⦿ A regeneration stand
- ⦿ The rejuvenation tank
- ⦿ The sequencing spatula

PROTOCOL

To make a sclerotium, you need to dry the blob gradually.

1 Line the bottom of the rejuvenation tank with a regeneration stand. Using a disinfected sequencing spatula, cut out a piece of matrix covered with blob, roughly the size of a 2-euro coin. Place your slimy slice on the regeneration stand. Moisten the entire surface of the stand with a little water, but not too much—just enough to be held by capillary action. Drain if necessary, then close the tank with its lid. Return the blob to the dark and... don't touch anything else! Observe.

2 Watching closely (if you're a pro, you'll do this hidden behind sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat), keep an eye on the blob's every move. If it feels at ease, curiosity (and its appetite) will sooner or later prompt it to climb down from its high ground and seek out food. But there's a trick... this time, you haven't prepared anything to satisfy its hunger. The blob's slow exploration of its new environment begins and usually lasts 24 hours.

During this time—at the risk of sounding a bit amateurish—it's perfectly fine to go to the bathroom or even go about your daily life.

Wait patiently, and once it has come down completely (or mostly), you'll be ready for the second phase of the plan!



INTERCEPTION !

3 Hold your breath so you won't be spotted. Without warning, open the tank and remove the abandoned matrix sludge, leaving the blob with no other option but the regeneration medium. To ensure your betrayal is flawless, when you replace the lid, leave it casually ajar. The small air vent you've just created will allow the regeneration stand to dry out gradually.

Ideally, it should dry out completely in a day and a half (always in the dark). If it dries too quickly, the blob won't have time to form its sclerotium and may die. If it dries too slowly, the blob will have time to become too hungry and may trigger sporulation. If your blob sporulates, you'll see lots of small dried stalks topped with tiny black "seeds." Although this phenomenon is fascinating to watch, you won't be able to bring your blob back to life afterward. You'll have to start the process over with another piece of blob.

You waited 24 hours and your blob has gradually shrunk to form a nice, relatively uniform orange crust?

Great, you've succeeded! Store your sleeping beauty in a place protected from light and moisture (temperature doesn't matter). You can wake the blob up as early as tomorrow if you wish—or in a year or two—whichever you prefer.



Making sclerotia isn't an exact science; sometimes things go wrong even when you follow these rules. Start several so you can be more confident that at least one will turn out right.

6TH KNOWLEDGE THE MAZE CHALLENGE

The blob? You're not the only one curious about it. A small squad of scientists is already working to unravel its mysteries. But do you really know what interests them?

Navigating and finding the shortest path, learning a skill, memorizing it and recalling it days later, transferring it to another individual, having a different hunting strategy depending on its native habitat, analyzing environmental cues, and making decisions based on the experiences of others... yet despite lacking a brain, the blob is an exceptional single-celled organism.

You, too, surely have questions to ask the blob..

What new experiences will you create?



THE MAZE EXPERIENCE

We all love mazes. They test our sense of direction, logic, memory, and perseverance... They can be seen as an allegory for life. Highly visual, the maze experience puts us in the position of an observer god for the blob. You may be familiar with one of the most famous maze experiments involving the blob: it tests its ability to find the shortest path between two food sources. But the maze in your pocket lab tests something new...

THE PARAMETERS OF LIFE

It hasn't escaped your notice that if you cut a blob in half, you get two viable and distinct individuals. But have you realized, as a result, that they are also genetically identical? In the strictest sense: true clones.

Interesting, even thrilling. Being able to create clones so easily is a dream come true for many scientists! And you can sense that this superhuman ability raises new questions. For example:

What happens if two identical organisms race against each other?

It's like fighting against yourself.

Will they perform exactly the same, or might their choices and abilities vary from one individual to another? If one blob beats the other, can we say it's a matter of personality, or perhaps of environments that might be slightly different? If it is due to the environment, to what extent can even a minor "irregularity" in the path lead to a completely different race result? And if it is the blob's personality that differs, how is it formed? Can a different environment result in different personalities?

With this maze, we open the door to questions that no longer merely concern the blob, but the very workings of life itself.



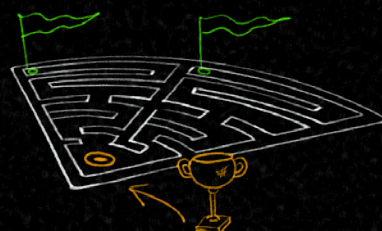
THE CLONE RACE

REQUIREMENTS

Make sure your blob is well-developed. To make it easier to handle, let it go without food for a while so it will start exploring the sides of the box lid on its own. The fact that it's no longer attached directly to the matrix will make it much easier to remove.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- ⊙ The blob incubator
- ⊙ The matrix powder
- ⊙ A few growth particles
- ⊙ A marker pen
- ⊙ And of course, the maze!



PROTOCOL

To make a sclerotium, you need to dry the blob gradually.

- 1** Start by giving the incubator and the maze a good cleaning: sterilize them with alcohol.
- 2** Next, pour a thin layer of about 2 mm of matrix into the incubator and get ready to work quickly and carefully. While the matrix is still very hot and liquid, place the maze in the center of the incubator. Although your squeals may be amusing, watch your fingers. Close the incubator and wait 20 minutes for the matrix to gel.

Why exactly 2 mm thick?

You're starting to get to know the little rascal... at the slightest opening, he'll take the shortcut rather than the marked path. By submerging half the maze in the matrix, you seal the walls and floor together. Any escape through the base of the maze is impossible because the blob doesn't know how to dig (yet?). But... he knows how to climb!



If the growth particle is worth the effort, the blob is more than willing to escape. For the next step, get ahead of the game and arm yourself with a marker.

3 Gently but generously apply the marker ink to all the upper horizontal surfaces of the maze. Most marker inks act as a repellent for the blob. Use a marker, not a simple felt-tip pen, which generally isn't very effective.

The maze is set up and you've repainted the walls? You're definitely a talented architect

4 Now invite your blob to take part in the experiment. If it's a little nervous about having its skills tested, take the time to explain that no matter how it performs, you'll love it just as much because you find it unconditionally fascinating. Is it reassured now?

Using the sterilized sequencing spatula, gently scrape small amounts of blob and place them at the starting line of each race track. As the referee, be fair: make sure to add equal amounts of blob on each side of the maze.

5 Once your blob is positioned at the starting line, reward it for its efforts by placing a small pile of growth particles at the maze's finish line.

6 Final stretch: Close the lid now and place the blob inside the UV-protective shelter. Give the signal to start the race. 3, 2, 1... Crawl!

7 Get your speed guns ready! With a top speed of 4 cm per hour, it would be a shame to blink...

THE ESSENCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC MIND

An experiment is the tangible expression of a question we wish to ask an organism or a system. Through the observations gathered, we strive to gain the best possible understanding of a reality that is still unknown. To maximize the chances of getting closer to this reality and avoid errors, scientists have established a number of rules over the years.

☉ For example, when you decide to test a question: even before launching your first test, it's important **to come up with a spontaneous answer yourself. This answer will be your initial hypothesis.** Subsequently, the results of the experiment will either validate it... or contradict it—we rarely know everything from the start. If you're disappointed, don't get discouraged. Instead, this often leads to new, even more interesting hypotheses. Reformulate or refine your hypothesis and test it again.

☉ Also, to understand the causes and consequences of a factor in an experiment, you should test **only one change at a time**, which we'll call a "variable". You must compare the specific situation you're interested in with the situation considered standard—the "control group"—that is, the one in which the variable is not present.

☉ Science quantifies. It requires numerical data to analyze accurately. **Think in advance about how you will collect your data** so that you can design the experiment accordingly.

☉ When a set of hypotheses is finally validated, it is elevated to the status of a theory. **A hypothesis cannot be considered true based on a single observation.** At most, it would be considered a clue.

To prove something, you must be able to replicate it. Keep in mind that the more sensational a claim is, the more it must be backed by solid evidence. This is why certain experiments on the blob are replicated up to 2,000 times in order to have a chance of being seriously considered by a scientific journal. In this specific case, the goal was to prove that the blob, a single-celled organism, was capable of learning. There was certainly good reason to be meticulous about the replicas.

You seem very calm—are you lost?



6TH KNOWLEDGE: THE MAZE CHALLENGE

☉ Let's be honest, you're unlikely to be able to follow every single rule to the letter; you're going to make mistakes, especially if you're about to launch your very first experiment. But does that mean you should stop asking questions and conducting your investigation?

The last rule should give you the answer...

☉ A good scientist knows and acknowledges the limitations of their own experiments. The maze of the clone race, for example, certainly has the main weakness of ambition: it tackles a very broad question about how the world works and should certainly break down the tested parameters further into smaller, simpler experiments.

Consider it an initiation.

An initiation that, we hope, will take you even further!



FINAL WORDS

Don't be afraid to dream just because your dreams seem too far removed from reality.

Before becoming common knowledge, every discovery was once a result. That result was an experiment. That experiment was a hypothesis, which began, at the very start... as an intuition.

Science would be ineffective without intuition. Intuition would be unprovable without science.

Intuition discovers; science proves. By proving, science brings together, with tangible evidence, people whom intuition could not reach. It can also tell you bluntly that you're on the wrong track.

But no matter—you'll bounce back.
So go ahead... imagine...

And remember: you alone are responsible for your curiosity.
Take care of it.



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