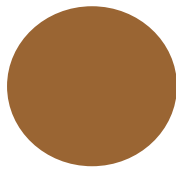


Colony Morphology: Describing Bacterial Colonies

Frequently during the semester you will need to describe bacterial (or fungal) growth observed on slants or Petri plates. It will be useful to learn the terminology used for describing common colony types. The following outline will be helpful for verbally communicating the appearance of observed colonial growth.

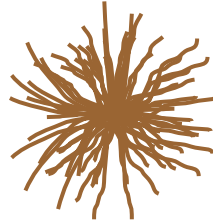
- 1. Form** – The form refers to the shape of the colony. These forms represent the most common colony shapes you are likely to encounter.



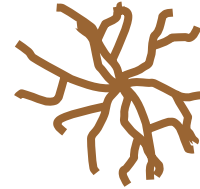
CIRCULAR



IRREGULAR



FILAMENTOUS



RHIZOID

- 1a. Size** – The size of the colony can be a useful characteristic for identification. The diameter of a representative colony may be measured. Tiny colonies are referred to as **punctiform**.
- 1b. Surface** – Bacterial colonies are frequently shiny and smooth in appearance. Other surface descriptions might be: **veined, rough, dull, wrinkled (or shriveled), glistening**.
- 1c. Texture** – Several terms that may be appropriate for describing the texture or consistency of bacterial growth are: **dry, moist, mucoid, brittle, viscous, butyrous (buttery)**.
- 1d. Color** – It is important to describe the color or pigment of the colony. Also include descriptive terms for any other relevant optical characteristics such as: **opaque, cloudy, translucent, iridescent**.

2. Elevation – This describes the “side view” of a colony. These are the most common.



FLAT



RAISED



UMBONATE
(having a knobby protuberance)



CRATERIFORM



CONVEX



PULVINATE
(cushion-shaped)

3. Margin – The margin or edge of a colony (or any growth) may be an important characteristic in identifying an organisms. Several examples are shown below.



ENTIRE



UNDULATE
(wavy)



LOBATE



CURLED



FILIFORM
(filamentous)