

# *Healthy Colorado Schools*

## **MARCH TIP OF THE MONTH: CLOVER MITES**



Clover mites are common nuisances around buildings. They are very small (slightly smaller than the head of a pin) and range in color from red to brown but can also be dark green. When they are crushed, they leave a rusty red stain. As it warms up in early spring, large numbers of clover mites enter schools through cracks around windows and doors, especially on the south or southwestern exposure areas. They are noticeable from late February to early May. Whether indoors or out, most of the mites congregate on the sunny side of the building.

Clover mites do not bite, transmit diseases or feed on clothing or furniture. They feed on the leaves of grass causing the leaves to turn brown. Providing supplemental water is helpful for the health of the turf grass.

Mites don't readily cross loose, clean cultivated soil, so providing a three-foot "grass-free" buffer between the building and any turf will limit their ability to enter the building. You can also caulk and seal all exterior openings to prevent indoor migrations and spread a fine layer of talc-containing baby powder, baking soda, corn starch or diatomaceous earth along those same southerly exposures around buildings. If clover mites enter the building, vacuum them up rather than crush the mites thus preventing red stains on surface areas.

**Keep Colorado schools pest free**