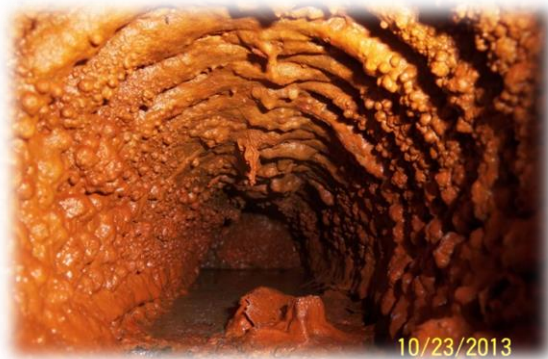


Why Trust Anyone Else?

Iron Ochre

Every now and then I'll see Iron Ochre in the basement drain tile. When I use the term iron ochre



most people look at me in puzzlement. The photo above looks like the belly of a dragon but is actually fairly new plastic drain tile coated with iron ochre. The photo was taken looking directly into the drain tile from the sump crock.

Iron Ochre is created by a waste byproduct of iron bacteria. This bacteria naturally occurs in environments throughout most of the world and in some areas of SE Wisconsin

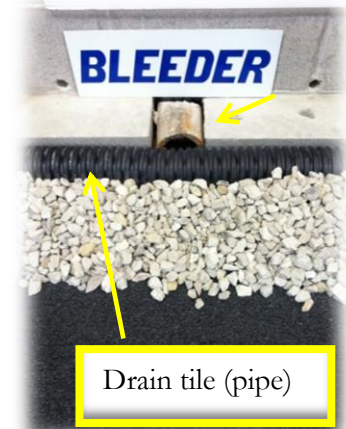
Iron bacteria survives by oxidizing minerals dissolved from water, most commonly ferrous iron, but also sometimes from manganese. As it does, it typically creates a reddish-brown or sometimes orange slime or ooze which can potentially be very thick.

The problem comes once the slime dries, it becomes as hard as concrete and can block or severely restrict drain tiles. Once dried, there is no way to get it out other than digging up the drain tiles for replacement. That can be both interior and exterior drain tiles.

Let's simply explain drain tile for those that don't understand it...

Drain tiles are actually pipes that are laid around the outside and inside perimeter of your home. As

the rainwater or snow thaw settles into the ground near your foundation the outside pipes, often referred to as drain tile, carry the water away from the foundation and into pipes called bleeders. The bleeders deliver the water to the inside drain tile and into the sump crock which then pumps the water back outside. The photo to the right shows an old ceramic tile bleeder with new plastic drain tile ...or pipes.



What else can we do?

Keeping the iron ochre wet is a challenge in the summer months when the ground becomes drier and there is not as much water running in the drain tiles. While the iron ochre is still wet it can be flushed with hot water. However you need an access point from which to flush it and most houses do not have such a thing. I have seen a few where there has been several access points installed and Chlorine tablets, designed for a pool, are installed on a scheduled basis. This will keep the bacteria at bay.

Most of the foundation repair companies in Southeast Wisconsin are familiar with iron ochre and have ways of dealing with it. But be aware, this bacteria is a maintenance item and must be dealt with on a scheduled basis or the repair can have a substantial impact on your pocket book.

Scott C. LeMarr
Honest Home Inspections, LLC