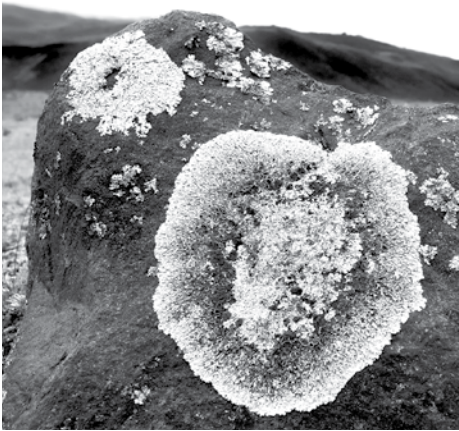


LIKIN' LICHENS

Lichens are not a single organism; they're a partnership – or symbiosis – between a fungus and one or more algae. The fungus surrounds the cells of the algae, which nourish the fungus through the process of photosynthesis. The fungus provides shelter, moisture and an anchor for the algae.

There are many different species of lichens, which fall into three main types:



CRUSTY LICHENS

firmly attach as a "crust" on the surface of trees or rocks.



LEAFY LICHENS

look like flat leaves.



SHRUBBY LICHENS

look like small leafless bushes.

Directions: Go for a walk in a forest or other outdoor area. Stop to look at any lichens you see, checking trees, rocks and other hard surfaces. Lichens are very slow-growing, so try not to disturb them!

How many different examples of each type do you see?

Crusty lichens: _____

Leafy lichens: _____

Shrubby lichens: _____

Lichen or Moss?

Mosses and lichens both grow on trees and rocks, and people sometimes get them confused. Unlike lichens, mosses are true plants with small leaves. If it looks like a soft, green, fuzzy carpet, it's a moss.

Sketch the lichens you find most interesting: