



Looking for Lichens:

**A field guide for a
backyard adventure**

If you don't NEED it LEAVE it.

Lichens grow slowly & take a LONG time to cover an area!

1. Never take more than you need, and never take the entire population in the area.
2. Always leave some behind to recolonize the open space. If there is not enough to collect, then leave it behind.
3. Wet the lichen first to prevent breakage when removing it.
4. When storing the lichen, always use a paper bag or paper envelopes.

When looking for lichen first make sure you have permission from the owner of the land you are exploring.



Take a picture instead of collecting it!

Scientist Notepad

Lichens come in many shapes, sizes and colors! What colors of lichens can you find? Remember, lichen colors look more vibrant when wet so spray them first to see their TRUE Color!

Severe heat, cold and drought are no match for lichens because lichens are able to “turn off,” during harsh conditions. What kind of surfaces can you find lichens growing on that plants are not growing on?

Without lichens, plants may not grow in some places. Lichens are often the first to grow on bare rock. Over time, lichens are able to break down rock and produce thin layers of soil. More complex lichens, mosses and flowering plants are then able to take root. Find a community of lichens and describe the layers of lichens you see.

Lichens are DIVERSE!

There are many different kinds can be found in four major forms. Check the box next to each lichen form you find on your adventure.

Crustose

Crustose lichens are thin like crust. The lichen's edges stay flat against the object it is growing on. Crustose lichens grow slowly



Fruticose



Fruticose lichens are the most three-dimensional lichens. Some look like mini fruit trees without leaves while others hang down from branches like hair.

Foliose



Foliose lichens look like dry, wavy foliage (leaves). The edges curl off the surface the lichen is growing on.

Squamulose



Squamulose lichens have scale-like lobes called squamules that are usually small clusters and overlapping

Sensitive Species

Lichens get their food from light, air and rain which make them easily damaged by pollutants in their environment.

Scientists study lichens to learn about air pollution. The healthier the air, the more species of lichen there will be.



- 1) On your hike, count how many different lichens you can find.
- 2) Based on your findings, would you consider the area to have good or bad air quality?

HOW MANY LICHENS CAN YOU SPOT?

Number of Lichens						
0	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+