



lichen

representative specimen

Kingdom: Fungi
Division/Phylum:
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

A lichen is composed of a fungus and an alga or cyanobacterium in a mutualistic relationship. The alga or cyanobacterium provides food for itself and the fungus. The fungus provides moisture and minerals to the photosynthetic organism. Growth is very slow. Reproduction is through fragmentation, where small pieces of the lichen break off and are carried to new locations and begin growing again. Lichens show a wide variety of colors.

BEHAVIORS

Lichens may be found statewide in Illinois. They grow in a wide variety of habitats from bare rock to soil. They are often called pioneer organisms since they may be among the first living things to grow in an area. They are sensitive to pollution and die quickly if exposed to changes in their environment. They provide food for many animals.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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