

Tour



# The Lichen Trail

**The Garden is covered in fascinating lichen.**



**Use the map to look for signs  
with numbers - these will  
help you meet a few of our  
favourite lichens**

## **What is a lichen?**

A lichen is two living things in the same body - a fungus and a plant. They both need each other to survive. The alga makes food from sunlight, whilst the fungus forms the structure of their home, protecting the alga from drying out.

**Pollution affects lichens, usually by killing them. Luckily, the air in this part of Wales is really clean so there are lots of different types of lichen here.**



# 1. We have two lichen themed exhibitions in the Botanic Garden across December 2021 and January 2022.

In our Oriel Yr Ardd Gallery in the Stable Block, I Spy Lichen features new hand stitched representations of lichens by the Botanic Garden's Stitching Botanical group. They have created this textile exhibition to show the colour, diversity, design sources and fun to be had searching for this intriguing lifeform.



In the Apothecary's Hall, you'll find Cryptic Landscapes by artist Sarah Rhys. These are special new artworks, many in porcelain, based on lichen and moss specimens found around Carmarthenshire's Tywi Valley.



## 2. Have a good look

There is a line of honey locust trees just outside our shop. They are covered in lichen. Find a magnifying lens hanging from a tree. Use it to look to see how the lichens attach themselves to the tree. Look for granules or black dots – these contain the spores (seeds) that help lichens to spread to other trees.



## 3. Dye-ing to see Lichen

Lichens have been extensively used to dye textiles - yellows, reds and even purple dyes have been obtained from different lichen species. *Parmelia saxatilis*, known as Grey Crottle in Scotland, produces a reddish brown colour that is still used to dye Harris Tweed. It forms large colonies on the Spotted Dolerite in the Rock of Ages.



#### 4. Bird Poop Lichen

Find Some birds like to perch on a particular spot, where they can look for food and sing. Where they poop, a particular lichen likes to grow. This is the bird poop lichen. It is yellow and stands out on the grey rock. You can find it on the rocks along our Broadwalk,



#### 5. Lichens that look like bandages

Some lichens grow very slowly. So slowly that the expanding tree trunk grows faster than they do. Have a look at a beech tree - can you see how the whitewash lichen has been stretched so much that it looks like a sticking plaster.



#### 6. Lichen on Benches

Lichen can grow on virtually anything - around this Garden you can find them on trees, rocks and pavements. Wooden benches are a particular favourite of lichens. Have a look for lichen on this one along the Broadwalk. Lichen grow so fast on our benches that we have to sometimes wash them off as people don't want to sit on them anymore. Would that bother you?



#### 7. Script Lichen

There's a tree in our Springwoods that is covered in a lichen that looks like the tree fairies have written all over it. Look for the number 4 sign to find the ash tree. Can you read any of the words?

What do you think the mysterious writing says? 'Hello?', 'I am a lichen?', 'I love lichen' ??



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Mae fersiwn Gymraeg o'r ddogfen hon ar gael

