

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE 10



Lichen

FUNGI AND ALGAE

HABITAT:

Grows on trees and rocks as well as human made structures such as houses, cars, poles, and walls. Grows worldwide including tropics, polar regions, and desert.

FUN FACT:

Lichen can travel in space! Scientists have tested how resilient (flexible, strong, and able to adapt) lichen is by sending it into Earth's orbit in space. A handful of lichen species survive by going dormant (basically taking a deep nap!)



DO YOU ENJOY PAINTING?

When I was a young girl, a neighbor told me that God paints the sunset every evening. I have always loved thinking about that, and I have a similar thought when walking through the woods or around a lot of rocks or boulders: God paints the woods in lichen! Do you know what lichen is? Lichen is that bumpy stuff that grows on many rocks, trees, and other surfaces. It can be green, yellow, orange, red, and even black.

Did you know Lichen is alive? Lichen is what we call a symbiotic (sim-bee-O-tick) relationship in nature. That means it is made up of two different living things that help each other. In this case, lichen is both algae (a plant) and fungus. The algae allows the lichen to take in sunshine and turn it into food through a process called photosynthesis. The fungus allows the lichen to better take in water and nutrients it needs to grow. And get this: lichen covers around 7% of the earth's surface. God has painted earth in beautiful, living lichen! Take a walk outside today and see if you can spot some lichen.

Nature is full of symbiotic relationships. Bees and flowers are another good example. Flowers give bees the pollen and nectar they need, and bees help spread the flower's pollen to grow more flowers. God created things in nature to help each other. In the same way, He has given His children gifts to help each other. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace."

What do you think are some gifts God gave you? Maybe creativity, kindness, knowledge, or humor? How can you use those gifts to serve someone today?

Eryn Lynam
Master Naturalist, Bible Teacher,
Host of the Nat Theo Podcast
erynlynum.com

April 15, 2024

