

## What are Lichen?

A lichen is a composite organism made up of a fungi and algae growing symbiotically. In addition to adding color and texture to the natural world, lichen are beneficial in many ways. Lichen prevent their host from drying out by capturing moisture from the surrounding air. They accumulate and release nutrients required by trees for growth. Some wildlife depend on lichen for food, nest-building material, or for use as camouflage. Lichen act as “carbon sinks” and therefore play a role in regulating the climate. Unable to tolerate pollution, scientists view the presence of lichen as an indicator of a healthy environment.

Here are three common lichen classifications:

**Crustose** grows on rocks or wood. These lichen’s bright patches of color are rooted into their host and represent several different varieties. Growth is measured in millimeters per year.



Leafy or lobed **Foliose** with upper/lower sides loosely attached to its host. It grows on rocks, tree branches and trunks, on roofs and fences made of wood. Strong winds often dislodge this lichen from its host.



**Fruticos** are pendulous or shrubby. Their branches can be round, flat, or ribbon like with an open lacy look. They can either be loosely attached to their host, or not at all. Because they drape or hang down from tree branches, they are called “beard” lichen.



# Resources

## Lichen

California Lichen Society  
[www.californialichen.org](http://www.californialichen.org)

Lichen of North America  
[www.lichen.com](http://www.lichen.com)

## Books & Publications

California Lichens, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
California Lichen Society

Mosses, Lichens & Ferns of  
Northwest America, Vitt, Marsh,  
Bovey, Lone Pine Press

Lichen of North America, I. Brodo,  
Sylvia & Stephen Sharoff, Yale U. Press

## Open Space Parks & Preserves

Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation  
[www.parkhere.org](http://www.parkhere.org)

SCC Open Space Authority  
[www.openspaceauthority.org](http://www.openspaceauthority.org)

Mid Peninsula Open Space District  
[www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)

## On-Line Plant, Animal, Insect ID

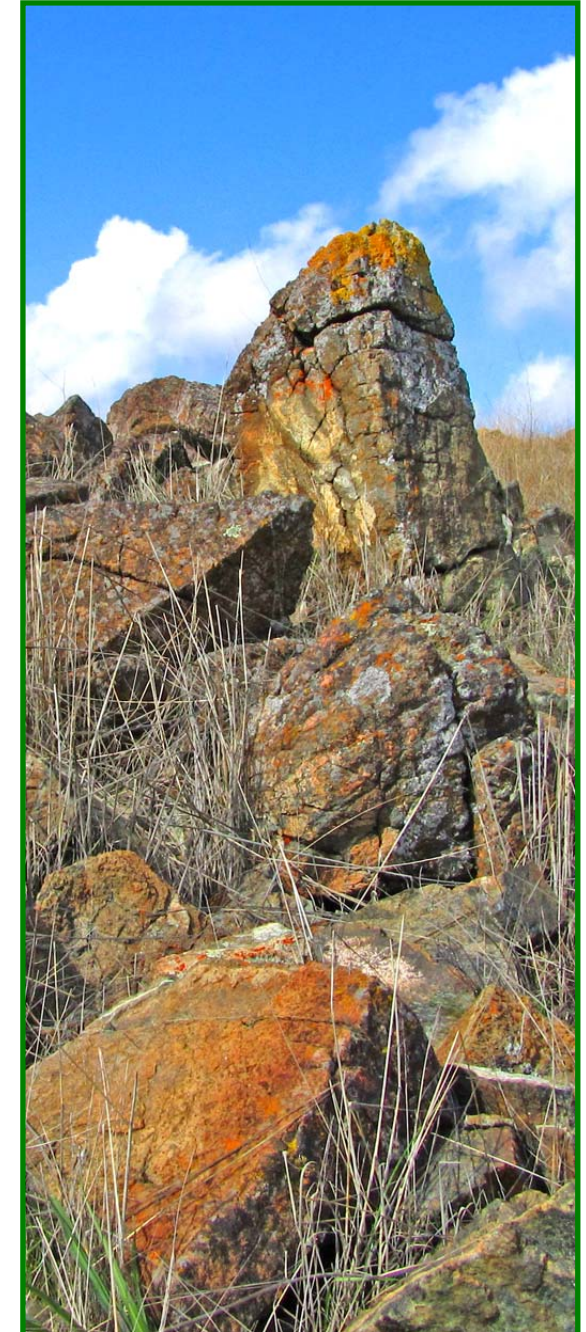
CalPhotos, UC Berkeley  
[www.calphotos.berkeley.edu](http://www.calphotos.berkeley.edu)

Natural Resources Database [www.nrdp.org](http://www.nrdp.org)

Henry W. Coe State Park (wildflower ID)  
[www.coepark.org/wildflowers/flower-album.html](http://www.coepark.org/wildflowers/flower-album.html)

# Lichen

*A closer look.*



Spring 2014



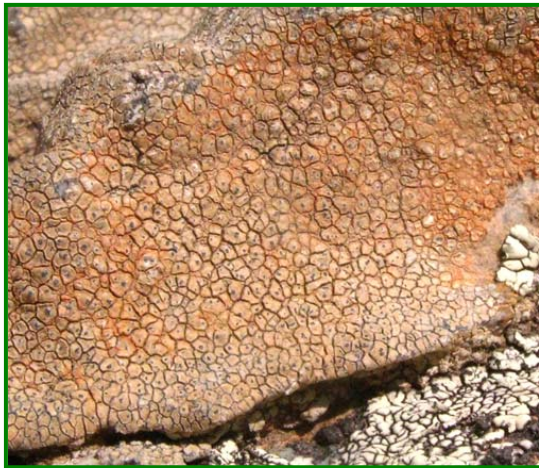
*Ochrolechia subpallenscens*



*Usnea arizonica*



*Hypogymnia imshaugii*



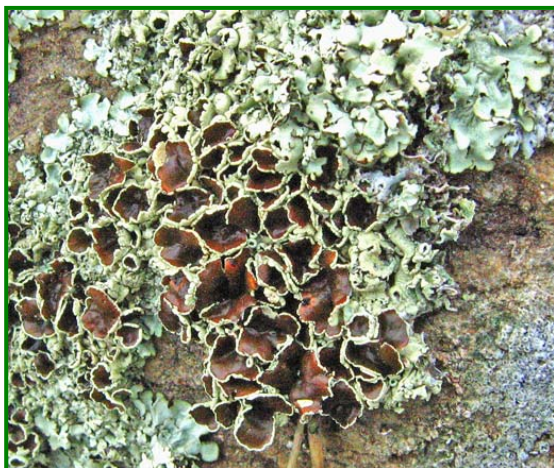
*Porpidia flavocaerulescens*



*Lecidea tessellata*



*Candelaria pacifica*



*Xanthoparmelia cumberlandia*



*Parmelia sulcata*



*Teloschistes chrysophthalmus*