

Common Orange Lichen

Xanthoria parietina

Plants · Present all year



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A conspicuous leafy lichen forming bright orange to yellow-green rosettes with wavy, lobed margins and disc-shaped fruiting bodies. It grows on walls, gravestones, roof tiles, rocks and the bark of nutrient-enriched trees throughout the Dumfries area, and is one of the most easily recognised lichens in Britain.

BEHAVIOUR

A lichen is not one organism but a partnership of a fungus with an alga, the fungus providing structure and the alga photosynthesising. This species is nitrophilous — it flourishes where nitrogen is high, so it is abundant near farmland, roadsides and bird perches, and its spread is itself an indicator of nitrogen enrichment. The orange pigment is a natural sunscreen; shaded specimens are greener.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Teloschistaceae
SIZE	Rosettes 2-10 cm across
STATUS	Native; abundant, and an indicator of nitrogen enrichment

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