

Lichens

Lichens are fungal organisms that grow in symbiosis with a partner species that can perform photosynthesis. In this sense, they are like mushrooms that have discovered how to perform agriculture.

Lichens were widely used by numerous cultures as sources of medicine and dye. Familiar to us all is **litmus** (Old Norse for "dye moss") which is an indicator composed of lichen-derived dyes.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, lichens were more valuable than spices. Despite this, to date there has never been a lichen-derived drug approved for clinical use.

