

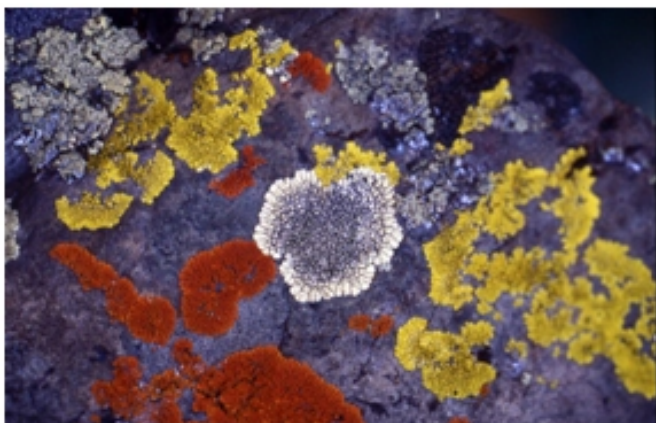
LICHENS – EXAMPLE FOR LIVING IN HARMONY

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Lichen is the general name given for a symbiotic association between a fungus and algae. Most scientists consider lichens a composite organism in which both fungal and algal partner benefits from its relationship. Although lichens are not very commonly found in the Maldives these fascinating creatures are examples for living in harmony.

There are mainly three types of lichens; Crustose lichens (grow over a substrate like a crust), foliose lichen (named due a resemblance to a leaf) and Fruiticose lichens (shrubby appearance). Crustose lichens are commonly mistaken for mosses like plants which belong to bryophytes in the plant kingdom.

Lichens consist of a fungal partner and an algal partner. Fungal partner provides protection against infections and algal partner provide photosynthetic products as nutrient.



According to the European Space Agency lichens can survive unprotected in space. Lichens are excellent indicator of air pollution, since there are highly susceptible to sulphur dioxide. Lichens are consumed as food in many parts of the world. Lichens are used in preparation of porridge, pudding, soup and salads. Very few lichens are poisonous and they appear yellow. Lichens are used to extract dyes like litmus which is used as pH indicator. Antibiotics are also secondary products produced by lichens.

Since these organisms have so much uses it important to

know about them. They are significant organisms which contribute to the biodiversity of our planet.



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