

Lichen Garden

- Lichens are complex organism involving a symbiotic relationship between a photobiont (green alga or a cyanobacterium or both) and mycobiont.
- Lichens occurs in distinct forms such as crustose, foliose, or fruticose. Majority of lichen forming fungi, belonging to Ascomycota, are associated with green algae known as Phycolichens, and around 1500 species of lichens forming fungi have cyanobacteria as primary or accessory photosynthetic partners referred to as cyanolichens.
- The lichens are peculiar organism which produces unique secondary compounds mostly not known in other plant groups. Most of the secondary compound produced by lichens have antibiotic properties.
- Lichens are most fascinating and widely distributed component of the earth. Lichens have high tolerance to various adverse environmental conditions like drought and extreme cold. They are able to grow from icy areas to tropical and subtropical type of habitat and from drier hot dessert to moist humid climate.
- Lichens can be grow on any substances like soil (terricolous), humus (humicolous), stones, rock, brick (saxicolous), leaves (folicolous), tree trunk and twigs (corticulous), decaying wood (lignicolous) and also on other various man made substratum like glass panes, cement plaster and lime.
- Lichens which are bigger in size and shape can be easily recognized as leaflike (foliose) and threadlike (fruticose) commonly called macrolichens and the taxa which form a crust over the substratum and are quite smaller in size are called microlichens.
- Approximately 20,000 species of lichens are known from the world and India represents more than 10 % of these species. The lichen family Parmeliaceae is the largest family in India comprised of around 345 species. The largest lichen genus in India is Graphis which contains more than 110 species.
- Kumaon region of Uttarakhand has great lichen diversity. Around 630 species of lichens from the Kumaon region are reported. Munsyari area of Kumaon region Uttarakhand known as the Hot spot for lichens.
- Lichens are used as food and spices (species of *Usnea*, *Ramalina*, *Cladonia*, *Stereocaulon*, *Lacanora esculenta*, *cetraria islandica*, *Everniastrum cirrhatum*, *Leptogium denticulatum* Etc.), fodder (Species of *Usnea*, *Cetraria*, *lecanora esculenta*, *Ramalina*, *Parmelia*, *Roccella montagnei* etc.), Medicinal (Species of *Usnea*, *Parmelia*, *Umbilicaria*, *Heterodermia*, *Sticta*, *Lobaria* and *Cladonia*), and Perfume and Dyes (Species of *Evernia*,*Roccella*, and *Buellia*).
- A Project/ Experiment was Initiated in financial year 2019-20, as per approval of Research Advisory Committee (RAC) in 2019, to study of distribution and conservation strategies for lichen found in State of Uttarakhand. The project also aims to facilitate further Research in these species and to create awareness among people. The project has been funded under CAMPA scheme and is initially for a period of Six years. The implementing agency is Research circle of Uttarakhand Forest Department. The project has been established on an area of 0.50 hectare, at Patalthor in Pithoragarh Range of Research Circle. The lichen garden houses 24 species of lichen.
- Main species- *Aspicillia caeseocenaria*, *Bulbothrix sp.*, *Cetraria cetranoides*, *Chroothrix clorina*, *Cladonia corniculata*, *Cladonia coniocraea*, *Cladonia squamulosa*, *Dermatocarpum miniatum*, *Everniastrum cirrhatum*, *Flavoparmelia capirata*, *Flavopunctilia flavantior*, *Graphis scripta*, *Heterodermia leucomelos*, *Ramalina sinensis*, *Usnea longissima* etc.

