

Blue Felt Lichen

Degelia plumbea

STATUS

Special Concern 

Vulnerable 

75



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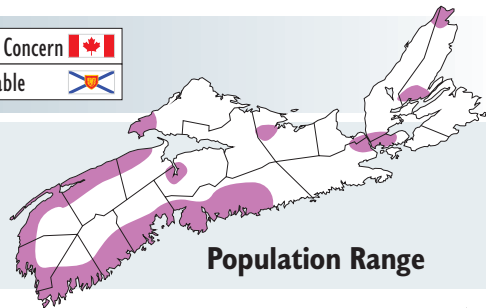
Lichens are amazing organisms that are part fungus and part algae or cyanobacteria.

Because they are small, some of the identifying features are best viewed with a hand lens.

Species Description

Blue Felt Lichen is a large, foliose (leaf-like) cyanolichen that is blue-grey in colour (lighter when dry and darker when wet), and typically 5-10 cm in diameter. Its upper surface is covered with longitudinal ridges and it has rounded lobes with scalloped edges. The lower surface typically extends beyond the edge of the upper surface and is a dark blue-black colour. The underside of the lower surface is covered with white, blue or black brushes (rhizohyphae). Numerous reddish apothecia (sexual reproductive structures) cover the upper surface, and are up to 1 mm in diameter.

Occurs in eastern North America and western Europe. Known to occur at more than 85 sites throughout Nova Scotia.



Population Range

Habitat

Blue Felt Lichen is found in coastal forests that are typically cool, humid, rainy, foggy and close to sea level. It is found in mixedwood forests with Red Maple and Balsam Fir and sometimes in mature hardwood forests of Sugar Maple and Yellow Birch. It grows on mature trees near areas that maintain locally high humidity levels including poorly drained wet depressions and areas close to wetlands, streams and lakes. The vegetation is typically dominated by Sphagnum moss and Cinnamon Fern.



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Blue Felt Lichen requires mature trees and a pollution-free environment. It also occurs infrequently in Newfoundland and New Brunswick.

Interesting Points

- Blue Felt Lichen reproduces by ejecting spores into the air from their fruiting bodies (apothecia). If these spores encounter a compatible cyanobacterium, a new lichen will begin to grow.
- Also known as “Leaden Lichen” because of the colour of its upper surface. This is a translation of the Latin name that was given to this species in 1777 by an English lichenologist.



Reddish apothecia

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Similar Species

White-rimmed Shingle Lichen (*Fuscopannaria leucosticta*): Small scale-like lobes (squamulose) rather than leafy lobes (foliose).



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Moss-shingle Lichen (*Protopannaria pezzizoides*): Blue-black lower surface (hypothallus) outline absent.



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Brown-eyed Shingle Lichen (*Pannaria rubiginosa*): Blue-black lower surface (hypothallus) outline absent.



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Threats to Survival

- Climate change (declines in fog frequency).
- Pollution (air pollution and acid rain).
- Industry, mining and mineral extraction (declines in air quality).
- Forestry practices, including biomass (loss of suitable trees, increased light levels, decreased humidity).
- Cottage and road development.

How You Can Help

Learn how to recognize rare cyanolichens and report sightings. Be an advocate of sustainable forestry practices. Woodlot owners can maintain old growth forests on their properties. Promote green technologies that reduce air pollution.



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Wet Blue Felt Lichen



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Dry Blue Felt Lichen



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: Nova Scotia Environment (902) 237-0841

Info: www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings