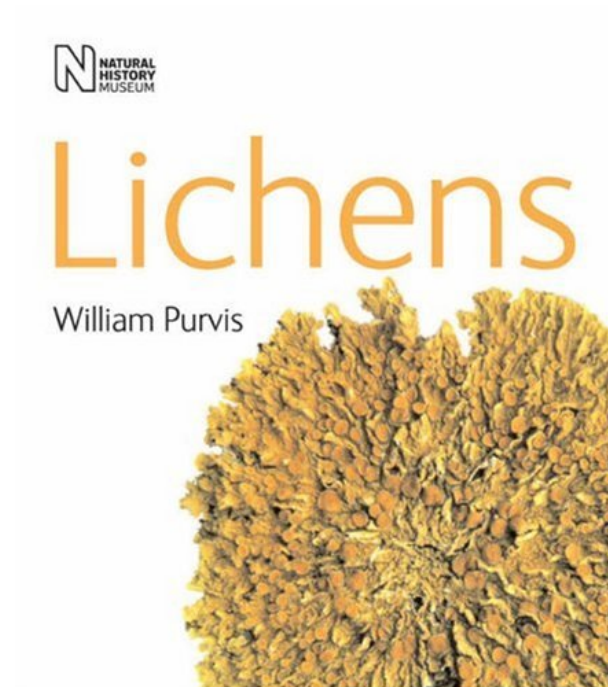


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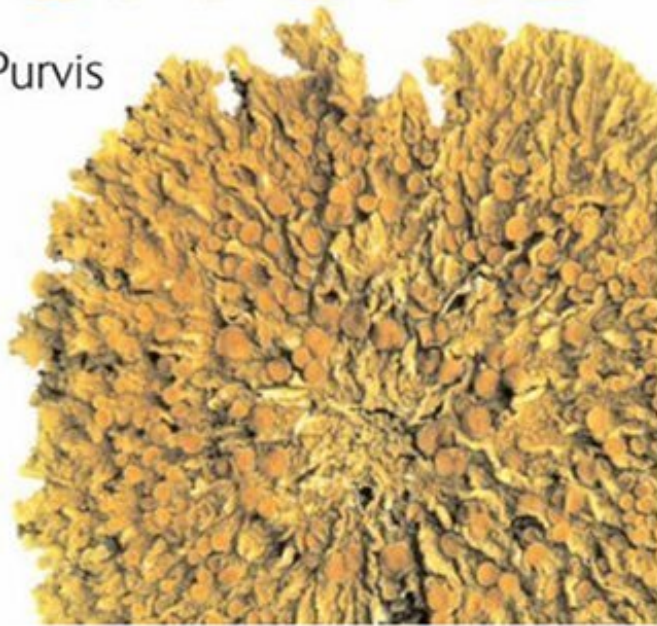
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William Purvis became a lichenologist at The Natural History Museum in London in 1988. He is the author of Lichen Flora of Great Britain and Ireland and is actively involved in using lichens as bioindicators of environmental health.

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Lichenologist, William Purvis here explores the unusual biology, amazing diversity and ecological importance of lichen. The text explains how understanding lichen biodiversity may lead to technological developments in medicine, metal prospecting and pollution control. It includes information on economic uses and outlines practical project ideas.

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Another Beautiful Book from the Smithsonian Press!

By David B Richman

Several books recently published by the Smithsonian Institution Press have been especially well produced. In an earlier review I noted the excellent "Dragonflies of the World," which is much more than a coffee table book. Similarly "Lichens" by William Purvis has illuminated a little known part of the biological world - the obviously composite "organisms." Lichens are a cooperative unit formed by fungus and an "alga" or a cyanobacterium. Some are easily separable into their component species, while others are almost single entities.

With exquisite photographs, interesting text and an attractive format, "Lichens" appears to be just about everything you ever wanted in a short introductory text. It is full of interesting facts about lichens.

I was disappointed in that Simon Schwendener, who was the first to discover that lichens were symbiotic entities, is discussed, but there is no mention of Beatrix Potter (well known for her children's books) for her role in supporting the symbiotic theory of lichens. Both were dismissed in their day, but later their ideas were accepted as it became obvious that they were right.

This is a great introduction to these weird entities, once thought to be likely candidates for native Martians. The price is very attractive as well!

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WOW!

By Kate B.

WOW! This is an astonishing hybrid of coffee table book and academic text. The photos are beautiful and the text is lucid. Not a field guide, but it is a great resource. As a non-expert I truly appreciated the lucid text but I suspect that this book would also be enjoyed by experts. I am very happy to have this book in my naturalist library.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Teriffic introduction to the subject!

By Rockman

Previous to reading this book my ignorance of lichen was profound. I've always been enchanted by the stuff but had next to no real knowledge of its life cycles and distribution or its importance to the diagnoses of ecological ills. All in all a useful introduction for the layman and an inspiration for further study.

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