

# Blue Felt Lichen

*Degelia plumbea*

<b>STATUS</b>	Special Concern 	Vulnerable 
Special Concern 	Vulnerable 	Not Listed 



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

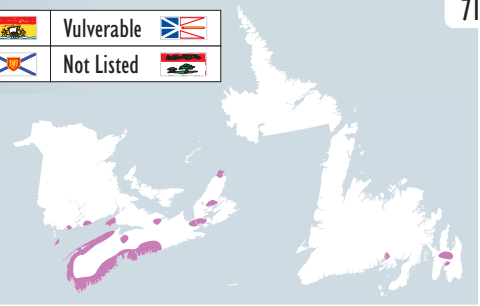
Because they are small, some of the identifying features are best viewed with a hand lens.

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## 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 in more than 100 sites throughout southern Atlantic Canada.



## Habitat

Blue Felt Lichen is typically found in coastal mixedwood forests that are cool, humid, rainy, foggy and close to sea level. It prefers growing on Red Maple in the Maritimes and Yellow Birch in Newfoundland, but can also grow on Sugar Maple, White Ash, Eastern White Cedar. It grows on mature trees near areas that maintain locally high humidity levels and 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.

## 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 “Leadén 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).



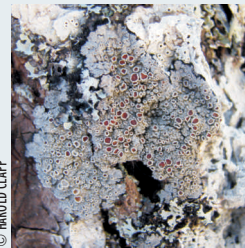
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**Moss-shingle Lichen** (*Protopannaria pezzizoides*): Blue-black lower surface (hypothallus) outline absent.



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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.
- In Newfoundland, high levels of browsing of Yellow Birch (main host tree) by introduced moose is a concern.

## 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.

## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** NS Environment (902) 424-3600, NB Museum (506) 643-2300, or NL DEC Wildlife Division (709) 637-2026

**Info:** [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or [www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings)



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Wet Blue Felt Lichen



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Dry Blue Felt Lichen



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