

Saving Devon's Treescapes Lichen Monitoring Project

About the Project

Devon's treescapes are stunning and crucial habitats for so much wildlife. But they are under threat from ash dieback which is estimated to kill at least 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years. It will affect everyone, but everyone can be part of the solution. We're leading on fighting ash dieback on behalf of the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum, and we are looking for Devon's communities to get involved and help us to save Devon's precious treescapes.

Saving Devon's Treescapes aims to provide hope and action in the face of the alarming changes that are already affecting our precious treescapes. We will support local communities across the county to plant and nurture thousands of replacement trees. These won't be ash trees, but they will be of other native Devon species including oak, field maple, aspen, lime, beech, birch, and hazel. The project will enable people to care for and celebrate our treasured treescapes, supporting local action for wildlife and climate change.

Get Involved

We are running a few citizen science projects so we can gather data on species that rely on ash trees, such as the brown hairstreak butterfly and some lichens. Having this data is really important to give us a good baseline so we can monitor changes in our treescapes over the coming years. You can find out more about our different projects on our website: [Saving Devon's Treescapes | Devon Wildlife Trust](#).

Lichen monitoring

There are about 900 species of lichen found in Devon, from a UK total of approximately 1900. Many of these species find their homes on trees, and some favour ash. We have put together a short list of lichens for which we would like more information about their distribution. They are all species that can be readily identified by eye (with the aid of a hand lens) and don't require specialist tests or analysis.

We're not aiming to cover particular grid squares (such as monads), but just want individual records. At the time of writing this, the country is in National Lockdown, so we urge you to stay local and when restrictions lift, to follow the latest Government guidelines.

The project is working in a few specific focus areas, but we would love to receive records from across the county. Some lichens on our list will only be found in areas of countryside where there is very little pollution, but there are some that will be found in your local park if you live in a town/city, so wherever you are, you can survey for lichens.

It's so simple to do, just go somewhere with trees as have a look on the bark! If you have a phone then you can get your grid reference. There are a number of apps and websites that can do that for you. Alternatively, note where you are and look up that location on a map, or a computer when you get home. We're asking for at least a six-figure reference.

If you need more help with your survey, please get in touch, jsmallcombe@devonwildlifetrust.org. As I said in the talk, I am not a lichen expert, so please do use all available resources to identify your



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lichen first. If you do need help after this, please send a photo and a list of features (such as colour, size of thallus/lobes, presence of soredia/isidia, location). Lichens are very small and can be hard to identify from a picture alone.

What you need to get started

You don't need much. A hand lens will make it a LOT easier, as some of the features are very small. A hand lens with a light is ideal, but you can use one without too. Take a camera or a mobile phone with you for photos. You can get quite good photos (with practice and patience) by holding your hand lens against the camera lens and adjusting the distance to your lichen until it is in focus.

Use the app to send us your records. It's web-based, so you don't need to download anything, just go to the address on your browser.

And finally, here are the links and documents you might find useful:

- We have the recorded talk available on YouTube here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7clxxwSPV54>
- The slides from the talk as a pdf.
- The best way to send us your records is via the [Saving Devon's Treescapes app](#), but if you'd rather, there is a Word form available.
- Please also read through the risk assessment provided.

Enjoy!

Lichens are amazing! They are such beautiful, complex organisms that are so often overlooked. We really hope you enjoy searching and exploring. The more you learn, the more you want to know! Did you know that *Xanthoria parietina*, a yellow-orange lichen on our list, glows pinky-red under UV light?

Your surveys and records will help us monitor lichens over the course of the project and beyond, so thank you very much for your time and efforts to help us. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Thank you and have fun!

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