

Cladonia Cup Lichen

Cladonia fimbriata

Plants · Present all year



Photo by Vasyliuk Oleksij, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A small lichen that produces distinctive stalked cups — like miniature goblets or golf tees — a few millimetres across, grey-green and covered in a fine granular powder, rising from a mat of small scales. It grows on peaty soil, rotting stumps, wall tops, mossy banks and old fence posts throughout the Dumfries area.

BEHAVIOUR

The cups are reproductive structures, and rain falling into them splashes out the granules, each of which contains both fungal and algal partners and can start a new lichen — an efficient way of dispersing a symbiosis that must travel as a pair. Cladonia lichens are slow-growing and characteristic of undisturbed acid ground, and are a major component of heath and bog surfaces.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Cladoniaceae
SIZE	Cups 3–20 mm tall
STATUS	Native; common on acid, undisturbed ground

Photo by Vasyliuk Oleksij, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons