

Lemon tart lichen

Lecanora sublivescens



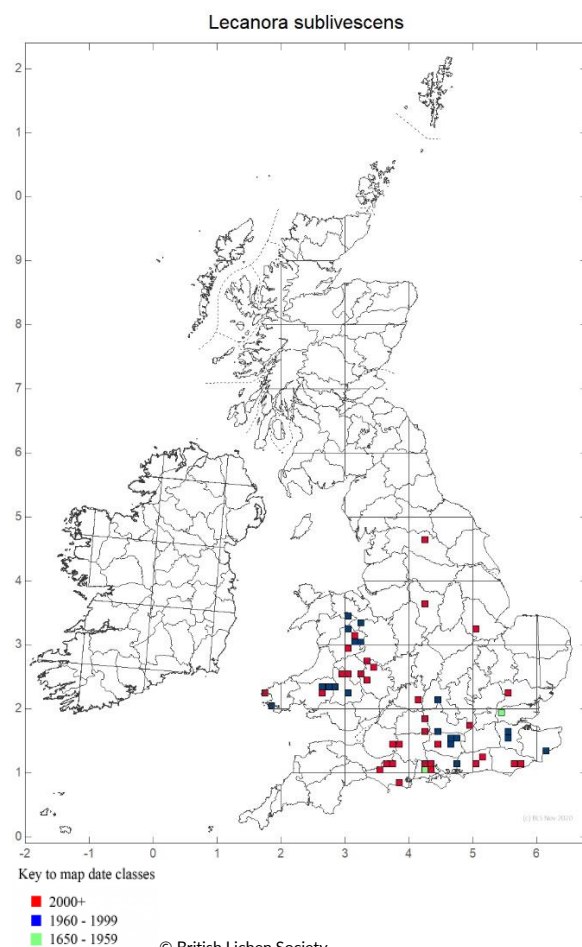
The Lemon tart lichen is a 'crustose' lichen i.e. one that grows partly immersed in its substrate. It has a pale yellow-green smooth or granular thallus (the 'body' of the lichen) with a cracked crazy paving appearance. The tiny (around 0.5mm) fruiting bodies are sometimes greenish yellow with a pie-crust when young hence the name lemon tart lichen, although this does need some imagination! They are often pinkish, greyish or piebald.

It is a rare lichen in Britain, assessed as Near Threatened in the GB Red List, is Nationally Scarce and listed as a Section 41 Priority Species in England. It is also internationally rare. It is only known from Europe, with Sweden the only other country supporting significant numbers of this lichen.

Distribution

Primarily a southern species in GB, with a 'sub-oceanic' distribution along with *Blastenia coralliza*, *B. herbidella* and *Lecanora quercicola* which all have similar requirements for old oak trees with base-

rich bark and well-lit trunks that are slightly damp. These species are often found on the same sites and even the same trees e.g. sheltered ancient parkland and wood pasture in southern Britain. Lemon tart lichen, however, can grow on somewhat more acid bark than the other species, so has survived a further into areas impacted by past sulphur dioxide pollution than other species in the ecological group.



Habitat

Lemon tart lichen is found on the well-lit trunks of mature or veteran oak, or occasionally Ash, trees and is a little more tolerant of more acidic bark than some of the other rare species it's found with e.g. *Caloplaca herbidella* and Lemon tart lichen so may be found more widely and in more exposed locations than those species.

It favours well-lit trees e.g. in parklands and wood pastures, as illustrated by the pictures below.



A large parkland veteran oak with Lemon tart lichen and other parkland tree specialists like *Lecanora quercicola*

Current threats

Lemon tart lichen requires:

- Veteran trees, especially oak and ash.
- Continuity of habitat i.e. successive generations of suitable trees allowed to age naturally.
- Well-lit trunks
- Clean air

As such its main threats are:

- Death or collapse of suitable trees
- Loss of continuity of suitable trees on a site and across the landscape
- Shade as a result of unmanaged regeneration and/or invasive non-native species inc. ivy which can be a particular issue on boundary trees and in the

absence of grazing/browsing or other management

- Air pollution, especially acidification e.g. from nitrous oxides and sulphur dioxide and excessive enrichment from ammonia.



A large veteran oak in wood pasture with Lemon tart lichen and other parkland tree specialists like *Caloplaca herbidella*

Habitat management

The aim of the following management advice is to ensure the long-term continuity and connectivity of Lemon tart lichen habitat:

- Maintain well-lit conditions in and around mature trees with basic bark in locations that support Lemon tart lichen e.g. by thinning regeneration (whilst being mindful of the need to retain some younger trees) and controlling invasive species, native or non-native e.g. holly, *Rhododendron*.
- Ivy can be a particular problem and should be controlled when young growth is invading trees that support Lemon tart lichen or suitable ones nearby.
- One of the best ways to maintain suitable conditions is with a controlled grazing regime. As with any wood pasture or pasture woodland grazing management this needs to be well considered and well managed to allow pulses of tree regeneration whilst maintaining generally open conditions.
- Identify younger suitable trees to become future veterans and manage around them to create the right conditions.

- If no suitable trees exist plant future veteran oak close to existing populations, although not so close as to cause shade and competition issues.
- Remove or reduce sources of locally generated atmospheric pollutants e.g. by reducing stocking levels if excessive and by limiting fertilising of grasslands.

Survey methods

Surveying for Lemon tart lichen requires a specialist lichen surveyor.

Further information

<http://wales-lichens.org.uk/species-account/lecanora-sublivescens>

<https://fungi.myspecies.info/all-fungi/lecanora-sublivescens>

The Back from the Brink Ancients of the Future project is led by Buglife in partnership with Plantlife and the Bat Conservation Trust.

