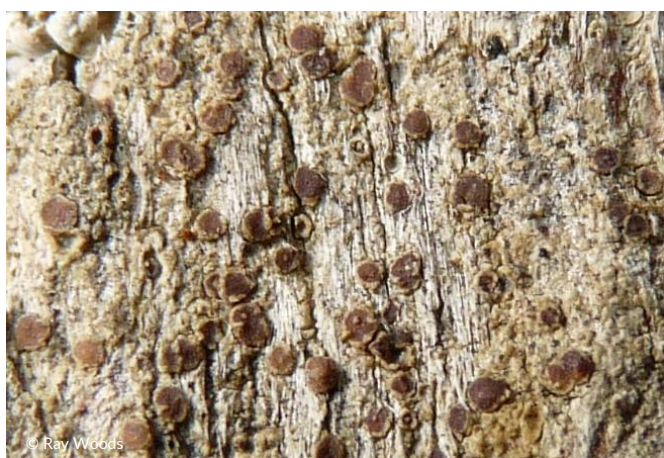


# Oak rim lichen

## *Lecanora quercicola*

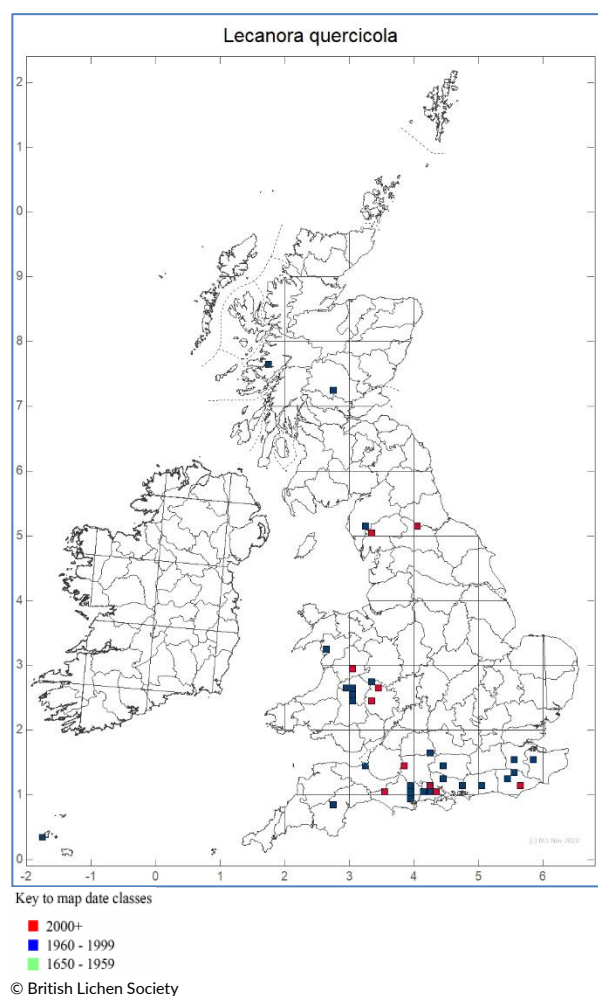


The Oak rim lichen is a 'crustose' lichen i.e. one that grows partly immersed in its substrate. It has a pale grey to pale green-grey (especially when dry) finely warted or granular thallus (the 'body' of the lichen). The tiny (around 0.5mm) fruiting bodies look like tiny pumpkin pies with a brown disc – pie-top - in the centre with a pale crust surrounding.

It is a rare lichen in Britain, assessed as Vulnerable in the GB Red List, is Nationally Scarce and listed as a Section 41 Priority Species in England.

### Distribution

Primarily a southern species in GB, with a 'sub-oceanic' distribution along with *Blastenia coralliza*, *B. herbidella* and *Lecanora sublivescens* 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.



### Habitat

Oak rim lichen is found on the well-lit trunks of mature or veteran oak trees with less acidic/base-rich bark.

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



Oak rim lichen amongst other lichens on a veteran oak trunk. It is the pale grey patch below the blue pin that almost looks as if it could just be bark; this is a small and indistinct species!



A huge parkland veteran oak that supports Oak rim lichen, the tree is being surveyed by a group of lichenologists from the British Lichen Society

## Current threats

Oak rim lichen requires:

- Veteran oak trees
- 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.



Another large parkland veteran oak with Oak rim lichen and other parkland tree specialists like *Lecanora sublivescens*

## Habitat management

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

- Maintain well-lit conditions in and around mature oak trees with basic bark in locations that support Oak rim 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*.
- Halo thinning and other thinning works may be required to address understory and shade



issues that have developed over time e.g. in response to changes in management.

- Ivy can be a particular problem and should be controlled when young growth is invading trees that support Oak rim 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, 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.



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A well-lit veteran oak in wood pasture with Oak rim lichen

## Survey methods

Surveying for Oak rim lichen requires a specialist lichen surveyor.

## Further information

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

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

