

# Mosses, Lichen, & Fungi

As you explore Franklin Creek State Natural Area, you might find some things that look quite different from plants, trees and animals. They might look squishy, crusty, or hairy, and they can often be found growing on other organisms. These mysterious life forms might look a bit alien, but they grow throughout earth! They are called mosses, lichen, and fungi.

Mosses are simple plants. They have small leaves on a single stem. Mosses often grow in groups because being clumped together helps support each plant, and they can gather more water when they work together.



Fungi are neither plants or animals; they are their very own kingdom with over a million species. Unlike plants, fungi are unable to create their own nutrients through photosynthesis, so they absorb nutrients from different materials such as leaf litter, dead wood, trees, and other plants.



Lichen are very interesting organisms, for they are not just one, but two living things working together to live! Lichen are made of fungi and algae. The fungi makes the structure of the lichen and the algae photosynthesizes to make the food!



For this activity, you will be going on a micro hike! A micro hike is an adventure through a natural landscape where you notice all the smaller parts you don't normally see. Take time to look on trees, rocks, and logs to see if you can find any examples of mosses, lichen, or fungi.

While on your hike, find three different organisms, draw them in the space below, decide if you think it is a moss, lichen, or fungus, and give some evidence to support your idea.

#1

#2

#3