

Placynthium nigrum

COMMON NAME

Blackthread lichen

SYNONYMS

Lichen niger Huds.

FAMILY

Placynthiaceae

AUTHORITY

Placynthium nigrum (Huds.) Gray

FLORA CATEGORY

Lichen – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lichens - Squamulose

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Characterised by the calcicolous habit (limestone and calcareous sandstone), the closely attached black rosette-shaped, squamulose to subcrustose thallus surrounded by a conspicuous, blue-black prothallus; ±central apothecia to 1 mm diam., with a black or brown-black disc with a thin, entire, concolorous margin; and 1–3-septate ascospores, 7–18 × 3.5–7 µm.

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: Northland (Waipu Caves), South Auckland (North of Waikaretu). **South Island:** Nelson (Kaihoka Lakes, Mt Arthur), Westland (Punakaiki, Dolomite Point, Pancake Rocks), Marlborough (Chalk Range, Kaikoura Peninsula), Canterbury (Nape Nape, Weka Pass, Flock Hill, Castle Hill, Lowry Peaks Range, Motunau Beach, Mt Somers, Ashburton Gorge), Otago (Oamaru, Hampden, Northern Cemetery Dunedin, Otago Peninsula), Southland (Queen's Park Invercargill, Forest Hill, Castle Rock near Dipton, Clifden).

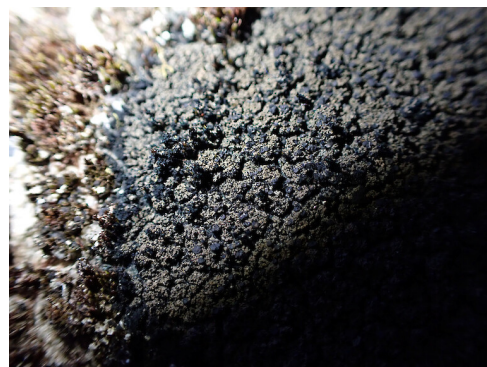
A widespread, circumpolar species in the Northern Hemisphere.

HABITAT

On limestone and a range of calcareous building materials such as cement, mortar and concrete, especially on bridge parapets, and walls made of limestone, and on tombstones and memorials in cemeteries.



Saxicolous on concrete post, Queenstown Otago. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 06/12/2022, Licence: CC BY.



Saxicolous on concrete post, Queenstown Otago. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 06/12/2022, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thallus in rosettes, olive to blackish, to 3 cm diam., not effigurate, surrounded by a black, marginal **prothallus**. **Lobes** squamulose, flat, 0.4-1.5 mm wide, margins crenate or digitate, squamules scattered at thallus margin, crowded centrally, forming a continuous crust which may become areolate, areolae 1-4 mm wide and 1-3 mm tall. **Isidia** present or absent, cylindrical, 0.2-0.5 × 0.05-0.1 mm. **Lower surface** blue-green, rhizinate. **Apothecia** 1 mm diam., with dark proper margin, disc brown or black, concave at first becoming plane or convex. **Ascospores** narrow-ellipsoid, 1- to 3-septate, 7-18 × 3.5-7 µm.
Chemistry: TLC-, all reactions negative.

SUBSTRATE

Saxicolous, calcareous building materials (cement, mortar, concrete, tombstones)

ETYMOLOGY

nigrum: Latin meaning black

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (26 December 2022). Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, and Features sections copied from Galloway (1985) & Galloway (2007).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Galloway D.J. 1985: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens*. Wellington: PD Hasselberg, Government Printer. 662 pp.
Galloway D.J. 2007: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens, including lichen-forming and lichenicolous fungi*. 2nd edition. Lincoln, Manaaki Whenua Press. 2261 pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/placynthium-nigrum/>