



## Topic: Hibiscus is Host for Lichen

**Question:** Can you identify this mildew growth and will it hurt my hibiscus plant?

- Tom, email

**Answer:** The growth is called Lichen. It is not a mildew. Lichens are combinations of green algae and fungal tissue. Each lichen species is one alga species plus one fungus. This relationship is often termed a symbiotic relationship or more specifically an example of mutualism. In this case, the alga makes the food for both organisms, while the fungus supports the pair and absorbs moisture. The host plant accommodates the pair and is not harmed by the relationship. Some plants, including hibiscus, are habitats for the thousands of lichen species.



## Useful Links

[Sooty Mold and Rust Mites](#)

[Citrus Problems in the Home Landscape](#)

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

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