

THINKSDAY

Lichen

April 16, 2026

“Lichens are just about the hardiest visible organisms on Earth, but the least ambitious.” — Bill Bryson

Neither plant nor animal, lichen is a community formed by partnership or relationship of fungi and algae. And they are not the only ones to benefit from their collaboration. Both can live separate from the other, but together they can survive and thrive in habitats that neither could do alone. The fungi create structure, and absorb both moisture and nutrients from the environment which is shared (Taken or given? — I don't know—but given away I wish to believe). The algae can photosynthesize with that moisture and nutrients and provide more complex carbohydrates to nourish itself and the fungi. Together they can break down rock and organics to form soil, create habitat in and of themselves for other creatures, become a source of food and medicines for other species, and serve as bellwether for air quality issues.

As I stood at my third No Kings Rally, I was heartened by the community coming together to create space, to support and encourage and inform one another of the seriousness of the nation's disease and peril. Few present there needed to be told, but they needed to be together. They needed to know that they were in community sharing concerns and views, hopes, and fears. And the Rally didn't just rail against the nation's problems, rather it called upon and modeled those actions, resolves, and unity that we need to overcome them. I was inspired by the calls to action and community, but I took even more heart at the shared conviction of the inevitability that we would, together, set the ship aright. Our ignited ambition is not merely of survival but also of decency, justice, compassion, courage, integrity, democracy, peace. On earth, as it is in heaven. I'm lichen it!

Happy Thinksdays