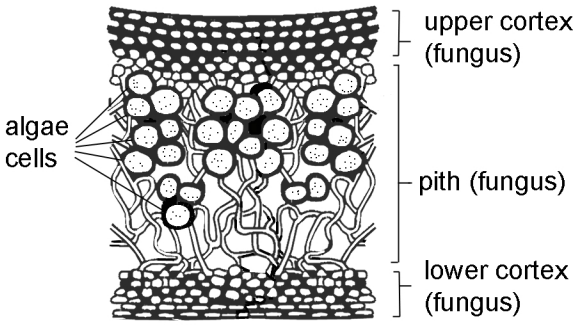
January February March April May June July August September October November December

British Soldier Lichen

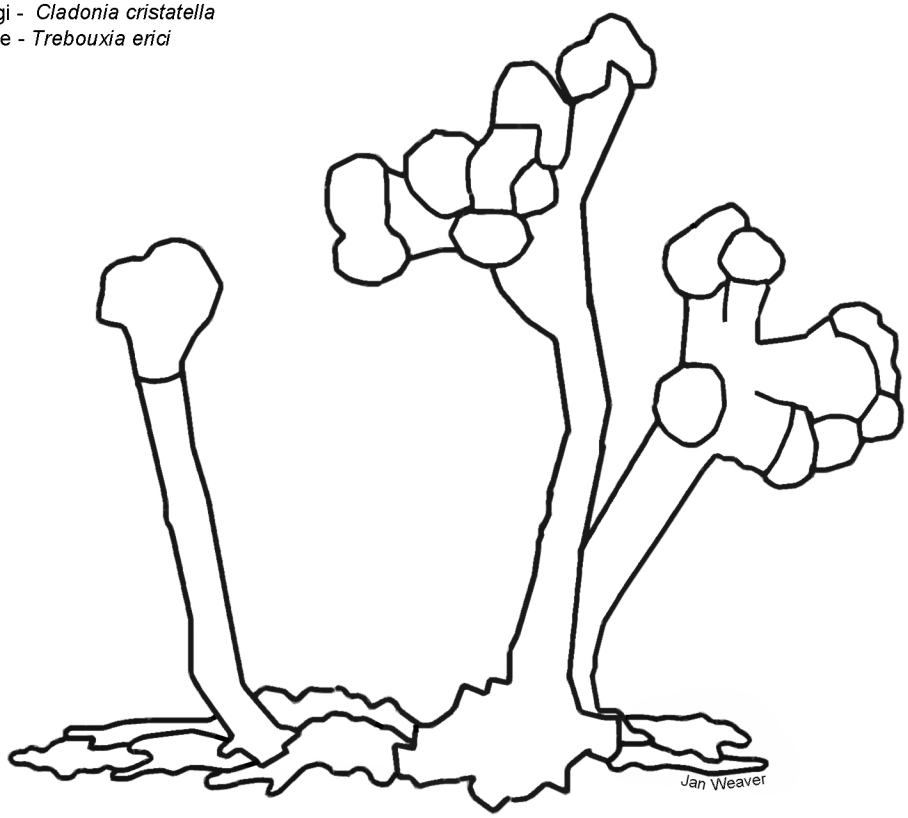
Cladonia cristatella

Lichen Portal - https://lichenportal.org/cnalh/taxa/index.php?taxon=53394&clid=1131
Britannica - https://www.britannica.com/science/British-soldiers

Lichens are made up of two kinds of organisms, a fungus and an algae. The fungus provides a body that takes up water and minerals, the algae is photosynthetic and makes sugar from sunlight. Because most of the body of a lichen is fungus, lichens are classified as fungi.



Fungi - *Cladonia cristatella*
Algae - *Trebouxia erici*



Coloring Guide
body and stalks are pale gray-green, the fruiting body at the top is bright red

Size
stalks are 6 mm (1/4") tall the main body grows 1 to 3 mm (1/10" to 1/8") per year age can sometimes be estimated by body size

Human Connection
Lichens in general are very sensitive to air pollution, so they only grow where the air is not polluted. This makes them good indicators of a healthy environment.

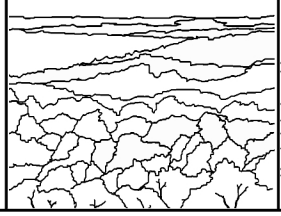
What eats British Soldier Lichen
white-tailed deer, voles, turkey, springtails, mites, snails

they provide shelter for
springtails, mites, spiders and other small animals

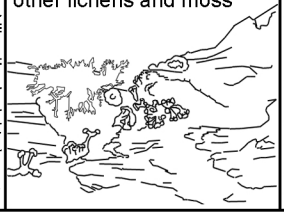
Family Relations
Cladonia cristatella is in the **Cladonia Genus** (shrubby lichens),**Cladoniaceae Family** (flat & shrubby forms) **Lecanorales Order** (reindeer "mosses"), **Lecanormycetes Class** (lichens), **Ascomycota Division** (sac fungi),and **Fungi Kingdom** (eats by absorbing, moves by growing filaments)

North American Distribution

Habitat (home/food/water)
mainly forests, but any damp, woody place will do



Home
damp, woody tissue, sometimes peat, often with other lichens and moss



British Soldier Lichens need

$$6H_2O + 6CO_2 \xrightarrow{\text{sunlight}} C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6O_2$$

roots, leaves, soil, air → leaves, stems, roots, branches, flowers, seeds, fruits, etc. → air

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