

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER



FISHNET LICHEN,
RAMALINA MENZIESII.

The chanterelle season got a bountiful start this year. A dry summer favors high production in this mushroom. Then rains followed by a warm spell made the first flush not only plentiful but with wonderful shape and form.

In our culture, Halloween is the gateway to winter, time of wet, cold days and long nights. Humans have a tendency to get glum during our rainy season, covering inside until the spring equinox. Most of our forest trees, evergreen conifers, find winter a wonderful time. With plenty of moisture to keep stomates open, they photosynthesize at a steady rate all winter.

Deciduous broadleaf trees miss out on this winter activity because without leaves they can not photosynthesize. The mosses on now lighted branches dance with delight, awakened from their summer desiccation dormancy. Extra light and moisture makes their green become brighter as new

growth appears at the tips of their stems.

Lichens dominate the outer parts of oak or ash branches. Like mosses, this is the start of their main growing season. Lichens come in more colors than mosses. Not seen are the dyes that can be made from lichens with proper fermentation: hidden, nascent colors for weavers. The growth form of lichens is more varied than mosses. All mosses have tiny stems with tiny leaves. Lichens form ribbons, tubes, bushes and swags.

Someone walking along the riverbank path at Mount Pisgah will see long, pendulous lichens that look like Spanish moss. These are fishnet lichens, a nice Halloween sight.

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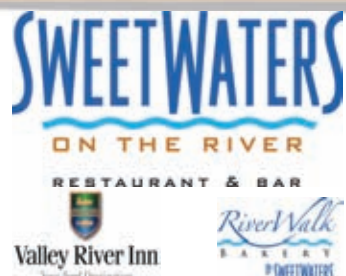
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