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## Cryptogam of the month-July 2008



### *Cladonia rigida*

*Cladonia rigida* is an Australian species of lichen, one of about 350 species which are widely distributed in both hemispheres. A common forest species in southern WA and is usually found on decaying wood or bark at base of trees. It is occasionally located on charred logs in wetter areas. The thallus is basal and is normally a small persistent tile like squamule. The massed erect podetia are powdery simple pole like structures rarely branching and have a tapering tip. The podetia's usually have terminal fruiting bodies (apothecia) which are not always obvious in this species.

The application of a spot of 10% Potassium hydroxide solution to the podetia results in an intense yellow reaction. This chemical reaction helps to sort out the identification of this species from other similar looking *Cladonia* species. This species is variable in appearance and has a named variety which is recognised in Australia that requires chromatography to segregate to this level.

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