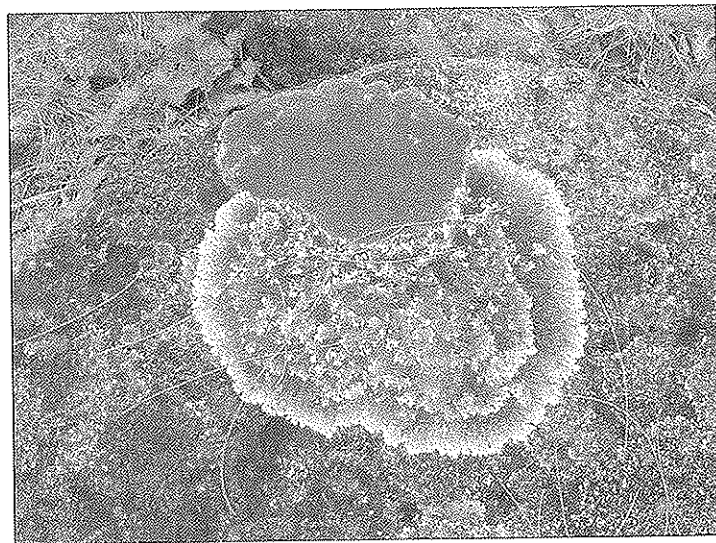


## IN BRIEF

### COMPETITION IS A FACT OF LIFE - ALL LIFE!

All living things compete for resources, and the strongest, or the fiercest, or the best organised, wins. To us a granite boulder may not seem a very desirable site for a residence, but it is ideal for some lichens. This boulder is smothered in lichens, there are at least four species in this photo, but the big greeny-grey one in the centre, a *Xanthoparmelia*, is growing fast – you can see it spreading out in rings. It is growing over the top of two other species of brownish-grey *Xanthoparmelia* that cover most of the rock. Clearly the winner in this competition! But look what is happening where it meets the chocolate-coloured *Rhinodina* at the top of the boulder – this one is defending its space very successfully. It looks as though this lichen has created some sort of chemical barrier that is preventing it being overgrown.

Lichens are fascinating organisms, and a whole new area of biodiversity about which we know little. While they are themselves a symbiosis of a fungus and an alga, they also have parasitic fungi



that live on them! Sometimes they kill the lichen, sometimes they co-exist. In this year's Fungal Foray, look for delicate fungi among the lichens.

Thank you to Graeme Rundle for the photo and Ray Cranfield (DEC Manjimup) for the lichen information.