Xanthoria parietina

Category	Description
Overall appearance	Bright yellow–orange, leafy (foliose) lichen with overlapping lobes; often forms rosettes
Habitat	Nitrogen-rich substrates: nutrient-enriched bark, bird perches, rocks, concrete, urban walls; prefers well-lit sites
Thallus type	Foliose
Thallus size	Typically up to ~ 8-15 cm across
Thallus colour 	Upper surface: Bright orange to yellow, becoming greener in shade Underside: White
Thallus edge	Lobed, slightly wrinkled, often overlapping; margins usually smooth
Thallus features	Small radiating lobes; wrinkled surface; abundant apothecia in centre; parietin gives UV protection
Rhizines	Present but few; pale in colour; simple, unbranched
Cilia	Absent
Soredia	Absent
Isidia	Absent
Pseudocyphellae & cyphellae	Absent
Apothecia 	Very common; orange discs with paler margins; “jam-tart” appearance; central on thallus
Any other surface features?	Cortex contains parietin (orange anthraquinone pigment); surface may appear slightly glossy in sun
Reaction with K	K+ crimson to purple
Reaction with C	C– (no reaction)
Reaction under UV (Fluorescence)	Vivid orange glow, primarily reflectance rather than fluorescence
Similar species	*Xanthoria calcicola* *Xanthoria aureola*

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Glossary

Term	Description
Thallus	The main body of the lichen — the part you see attached to bark, stone, or other surfaces. It can be crusty, leafy, shrubby, or powdery.
Thallus type	A thallus type describes the overall shape and growth form of a lichen. These forms are one of the first things used to identify species. The main types are: **Crustose** Flat and tightly attached to the surface, like a thin crust of paint. You can't lift it without scraping it off. **Foliose** Leaf-like, with lobes that lift away from the surface. They often have rhizines underneath for attachment. They often have two different colours on the upper and underside. **Fruticose** Shrubby or hair-like, growing upright or hanging down. They look three-dimensional, like tiny bushes or threads. They usually have the same colour all the way around. **Squamulose** Made of small, scale-like plates that overlap or sit loosely on the surface. A mix between crustose and foliose. **Leprose** Powdery or granular, with no clear structure — just a loose, dust-like layer of fungal and algal material.
Rhizines	Root-like threads on the underside of leafy lichens. They don't absorb nutrients — they simply anchor the lichen to its surface
Cilia	Fine, hair-like strands that stick out from the edges of some lichens. Their shape and length can help with identification.
Soredia	Tiny, powdery bundles of algal cells wrapped in fungal threads. They easily disperse and act as "starter kits" for new lichens.
Isidia	Small, finger-like or wart-like bumps on the thallus. They break off to form new lichens and are a type of vegetative reproduction.
Pseudocyphellae & Cyphellae	Cyphellae are tiny, round pits with well-defined walls, while pseudocyphellae are pale spots or cracks where the surface layer is thin or missing. The key difference is that cyphellae are true, structured openings, whereas pseudocyphellae are simpler breaks in the cortex (upper surface).
Apothecia	Small disc- or cup-shaped structures on the lichen surface where spores are produced — essentially the lichen's fruiting bodies.