### Problem
My trees are covered with this fluffy looking stuff. I am worried that this is harming my trees. I also think it’s ugly. How do I get it off?

### Description
There are large clumps of light grayish green “moss” all over the branches of my trees.

### Questions and Answers

**Question:** What kind of trees are you talking about?
**Answer:** I don’t know. The moss appeared all of a sudden this winter.

**Question:** Are the trees deciduous?
**Answer:** Mostly, but a couple of the evergreens also have some of it.

**Question:** Where on the trees does this appear?
**Answer:** On the trunk bark and branches.

**Question:** Are you sure it is hurting your trees?
**Answer:** No, but there’s an awful lot of it. I am afraid that the leaves will not come back next year because the moss will choke out the sun.

### Reference(s)
- http://people.oregonstate.edu/~mccuneb/licenharm.htm

### Diagnosis
**Lichens, not moss:** Lichens do not parasitize the tree that they are on. They use the tree as a support. Studies have indicated that lichens may be a good indicator of the environment as they only occur where the air is relatively pure and not where there is a lot of air pollution.

### Recommendations
Leave the lichens as they are.

**Cultural:** Care for the tree to ensure that the tree thrives and canopy is thick to reduce sun reaching branches where the lichens occur, reducing the food source to the lichen. Plant smooth barked trees as they give lichens less of a foothold. Physically remove lichens (power washer or brushes), but take care not to hurt the bark of the tree as you could open wounds that will allow bacterial and fungal diseases to attack tree.

**Biological:** none

**Chemical:** If it is a fruit tree, use copper sulfate as it seems to reduce lichen growth.