



Lichens on maple branch in December.

Signs of changes and renewal: lichens

I found the maple branch (photographed above) on the ground after a wind storm, bearing growths of lichens varying in appearance: one coating the length of the branch like a skin treatment, another like moss with gray berries, and a third like lettuce unfurling its leaves. Apparently, they live off the air and their growth is a sign of good air quality. Looking up at the crown of our maple tree, I can see lichen clusters at the ends of many branches like lacey ornaments, facing the east wind that comes over the hill from the ocean. Botanists say that lichens are some of the oldest living things, and that they like to establish themselves on surfaces that are still and inert. They do not harm the trees and vegetation that they cling to, and yet they are a sign of slow growth and even a reduced vitality. We must admit that our maple tree is getting on in years. When we take walks this winter, we plan to keep looking around for lichens in our favorite wandering places. Where lichens appear, we will stop, look, and take a measure of changes and renewal around us.

Seasons Greetings 2017 from Joyce & John



Lillies in July



Kaelen, Noor, Ibrahim, and Amal in August