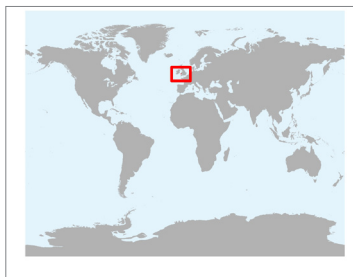




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NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	<b>&lt; CRITICALLY ENDANGERED &gt;</b>	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
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Geographical range

## Species of the Day: *Cryptomyces maximus*

*Cryptomyces maximus* is currently being assessed for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, however it has a provisional assessment of 'Critically Endangered'. This fungus has been known for over 200 years, but has never been common and is now, in fact, exceptionally rare. Searches throughout Europe since 2000 for this conspicuous fungus revealed sites only in southwest Wales and northern Sweden.

*Cryptomyces maximus* occurs only on willows, as a weak parasite of twigs, probably only those already damaged (for example by ponies). In this highly specialized habitat, *Cryptomyces maximus* does not seriously threaten the tree. It produces extensive irregular black crusts below the bark, characteristically surrounded by a bright orange or yellow halo. When ripe and moist, the fruitbody expands, breaking through the bark, and splitting the crust to reveal the fertile layer. Ascospores (sexually produced microscopic fungal spores) are released violently from this surface and are dispersed by the wind.

Although part of the Pembroke Coast National Park, the area in Wales with known colonies is very small, making *Cryptomyces maximus* exceptionally prone to single catastrophic events.

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