

# From leafy lowlands to icy arctic

## *O thalamh ìseal, tlàth gu artaig na deighe*

Pronounced: *O halav eeshal, tla goo arteck na deeaya*



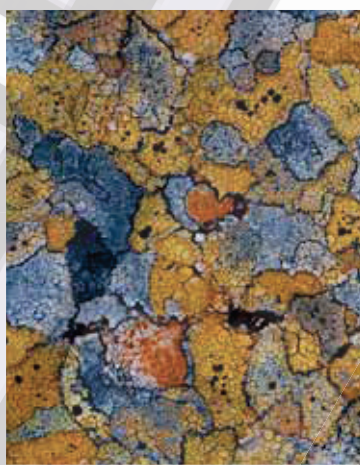
*Boulder-strewn oakwood: a rich and diverse habitat.*



*Purple saxifrage: surviving amongst the icicles, high up the mountain.*



*Starry saxifrage: tolerating wetter conditions.*



*Colourful lichens survive on rocks at a wide range of altitudes.*



*Sphagnum moss: a widespread species - particularly abundant in "blanket bog".*

**Ben Nevis Beinn Nibheis is Scotland's highest mountain. A wide variety of plants find suitable habitats here due to the range of altitude and geology.**

At the bottom of the mountain you'll find lowland woodlands *coilltean air thalamh ìseal*. Just slightly higher up the trees disappear and grassland *talamh-feòir* and moorland *monadh* take over. In peaty, wet areas - both at this level and higher up - you'll also find patches of "blanket bog" *boglach-chòmhaich*.

Further up again, the picture changes. This is where the snow often lies long into the summer in gullies and crevices. The poor soil and scree slopes at this level are ideal for many arctic-alpine plants. In some places the mountain's geology has created patches of richer soil - where a different range of arctic-alpine plants flourish.

At around 900m conditions become more difficult for vegetation. Patches of snow lie here all year round. The summit is bare and rocky, but even in these inhospitable conditions extremely hardy lichens grow on the boulders.

### Did you know...?

Ben Nevis has no fewer than seventeen habitats which are considered to be of international importance and even more which are of national importance. Everyone with an interest in the mountain has worked together to create a special management plan which will help conserve these habitats for the future.