

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) *Nostoc* sp. at Lower Smite Farm

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On 25th October 2022, I was alerted to the presence of a fungus-like organism at the entrance to Lower Smite Farm. This had been found by Jill Sparke and Ian Reilly who identified it as a *Nostoc* (01). I knew nothing of this organism, but quickly discovered that it is in fact a cyanobacteria, one of the so-called blue-green algae. They occur in freshwater but also attached to rocks and other damp surfaces.



01. *Nostoc* sp. at Lower Smite Farm. 25.10.22. Ian Reilly

There are many species within the genus *Nostoc*, but *N. commune* appears to be the most common species in the UK. I can only say that the mass at Lower Smite Farm is superficially similar to photos of *N. commune* on the internet. I understand from the Lower Smite Farm volunteers that it has been seen on the site in previous years. The current patch seems to be expanding along the concrete driveway (as of 1st November 2022). There are previous records of *Nostoc commune* from Tiddesley Wood and Rough Hill Orchard near Pershore, both on muddy tracks (Green & Winnall 2019) as opposed to a concrete driveway at Lower Smite. It would be interesting to hear of any other sightings of *Nostoc* species from other sites in Worcestershire.

Reference

Green, H. & Winnall, R. 2019. Three Algae – *Hildenbrandia*, *Haemacoccus* and *Nostoc*. *Worcestershire Record* 46 12-16

Image

Nostoc sp. at Lower Smite Farm. Ian Reilly