

Holly Speckle

Trochila ilicina

Identification:

This fungus only grows on dead (brown) leaves of Holly. Its appearance varies depending on the state of maturity, but it is easily recognised from the distinct fine (<1mm diameter) dark speckling on the upper side of the leaf only. The speckles (spore-producing structures) are first closed, then open by a lid to expose the olive spore-mass, and finally appear as dry black, shiny depressions in the leaf, with a slightly raised lip.



Holly Speckle *Trochila ilicina*.

Photo © Stewart Taylor.

More pictures can be found by searching on the internet.

Distribution:

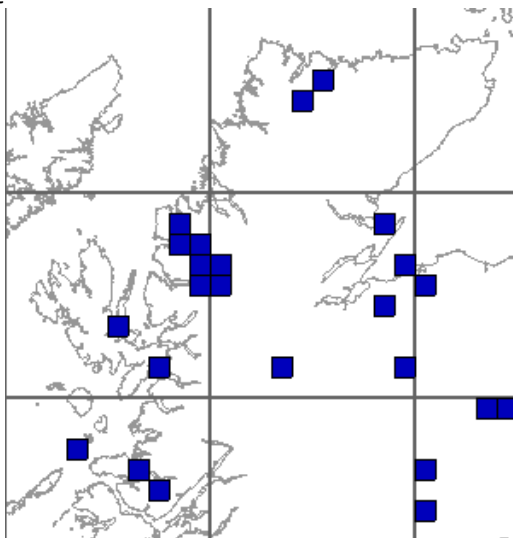
It is probably found throughout Highland where Holly grows.

When to look for it:

All year. The open lids are best seen December-February.

Similar species:

Other fungi or dark discolouration may occur. Ensure that the speckling is only visible on the upper side, and cannot be brushed or picked off. You may find another species *Phacidium multivalve* which is visible on both sides of the leaf; is raised above the upper surface; opens by a toothed pore, not a lid; and is larger (≥ 1 mm diameter). That is also in our area. If in doubt, keep a specimen for confirmation.



The National Biodiversity Network records are shown on the map (see terms and conditions at <http://data.nbn.org.uk>). Data providers and the NBN Trust bear no responsibility for any further analysis or interpretation of the information in the map.

Notes:

Look out also for the Holly Leaf Gall Fly *Phytomyza ilicis*. We are grateful to Liz Holden for advice in preparing this note.