

Mosses Now Are More Easily Seen

With the coming of November much of autumn's beauty lies winnowed and dead behind roadside and ravine.

But life goes on, although in less fragrant ways. Consider the mosses. Now that they have less competition they are more easily visible on tree trunk, on dead log or stump, on stone, on sloping bank, at water's edge.

Although a single plant is so tiny that it must be studied with the aid of a lens, growing in close proximity they make patches of green vegetation, especially in damp woods and swamps. Any student of their "small perfections" will testify to the beauty and variety which they lend to the landscape.

OVER THE YEARS on many a trip afield I have heard the echo of these words: "But I thought there was only one kind of moss!" However, with a little concentrated observation one can soon become aware of their diversity.

Actually there are some 300 kinds of mosses in Michigan alone, while many more species grow scattered from the Arctic to the tropics. Mosses are primitive plants

which appeared early in the history of our land flora. They are undemanding of soil and climate and by their living and dying they were instrumental in making the first soil.

Today they continue to contribute to the humus needed to support more demanding plants such as ferns, trees and wild flowers.

MOSSSES ARE simple in structure. They have no true roots but cling to their moorings with delicate rhizoids. Their small leaves are normally only one cell in thickness are usually arranged spirally around the stem and branches. They are able to absorb water quickly through the cell walls of all parts of the plant,

hence they dry out quickly and are easily revived.

For comparison of species in a moss study I have been making for the last several months, I have frequently used specimens which I collected more than 20 years ago. By placing these long-dried plants in water they resume the structural characteristics of freshly gathered material.

AS IN ALL spore-bearing plants, the life cycle is complex involving a small intermediate growth called "protoneura" which produces separate male and female shoots. From these come the eggs and sperm which unite to form the spore-bearing plant. This in turn bears the curious

and varied-shaped capsules enclosing the spores. They are sufficiently difficult to create a challenge as good as any puzzle but more rewarding, as the solution is not the end.

MOSSSES GROW almost anywhere except in salt water. They vary in size from microscopic species to the large sphagnum and the stream-dwelling Fontinalis which trails foot-long streamers.

Aside from the interest and beauty which they add to places which would otherwise be bare, mosses hold and gradually release large amounts of water. Certain species of sphagnum will hold 200 times their weight of this liquid.

THE NUMEROUS varieties of sphagnum have both ecologic and commercial value. They grow in such profusion at the edge of bogs and swamps that the area is gradually filled in by a succession of plants.

The peat of commerce is obtained from the compressed mass of the older portions of the vegetation that is thus formed at the bottom of bogs. When dried and cut into bricks it has more than twice the heating power of wood.

Dried sphagnum is also valuable as a mulch, as packing material, as filling for mattresses and pillows and as insulation for buildings. In any emergency it makes an antiseptic surgical dressing and as such has been used in war-time.

INDIAN MOTHERS, minus diapers and dryers, packed their babies in sphagnum then faced them to the purpose boardly, the easy carrying on the day's journey. Those who have the patience and interest for it, mosses make

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ACROSS

1 Indonesian island
8 Charts
9 St. Warner
14 Got off
15 Name for
18 Fibra
19 Moring
20 First woman
21 Fair
22 Lock of hair
23 Indicate
29 Word of sorrow
27 Roll of money
28 Mr. Mual
29 Clear of
30 Deductions
32 Throw
35 Non-paying
37 Burden
38 Golf club
39 Emancipation
40 Repetition
42 Flowering plant
43 Fakos
44 Real estate

DOWN

1 Lessened
2 Brightly
3 Flax cloth
4 Poes.
5 Ice cream
6 Assumed
7 An equal
8 W. Canadian
9 Type of fish

Answers to Puzzle Will Be Found on Page 6-D

45 Abyss
46 Plover back
47 Cakes
48 Remove hair
49 Labors
50 Old English coin
51 Pert. to an Amer.
52 Pert. to an epoch
53 Bard of ---
54 Construct
55 Nevada city
56 Hostess
57 Dish
58 Seltzer

10 Roman roads
11 Eat
12 Beverages
13 Obeyes
14 Male deer
15 Lawful
16 Proprietor
17 Grass plot
18 Was erect
19 Sea mile
20 Bionic
21 Russian emperor
22 Fly away
23 Hardy
24 Thought
25 Unmarried women

36 Squander
37 Pierce
38 W. Canadian province
39 Atmospheres
40 Cushion
41 Dispossess
42 Hunt goddess
43 Clothe
44 Alkaline mineral
45 Red-haired
46 Russian
47 Russian city
48 Towards the stem

Movie Guide

Parenteen Committee
Birmingham P.T.A. Council

MOVIE

Green Sheet National Legion of Decency

A-MY-Y A-1
Student Prince GA A-1
Brigadoon GA A-1
Haunting A A-2
In the Cool of the Day A B
Music Man GA A-1
Flower Drum Song A-MY-Y A-2

CODE

GREEN SHEET

These audience symbols are intended as broad guides to selection, and do not indicate either recommendation or non-recommendation of the films to which they are applied.

A Adults
MY Mature Young People
Y Young People (12 years to 16 years)
C Children (unaccompanied by adults)
GA General Audience

NATIONAL LEGION OF DECENCY

A1 Morally Unobjectionable for General Patronage
A2 Morally Unobjectionable for Adults and Adolescents
A3 Morally Unobjectionable for Adults
B Morally Objectionable in Part for All
C Condemned

SC A separate classification is given to certain films which, while not morally offensive in themselves, require some analysis and explanation as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions.

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