

Book on lichens, mosses, and liverworts illuminates lesser-known forest life



Editor's Note: Botany professor Bruce McCune (mccuneb@bcc.orst.edu) of Oregon State University kindly reviewed the book *101 Common Mosses, Liverworts, and Lichens of the Olympic Peninsula* (ISBN 016-066471-3, copyright 2001) by Martin Hutten, Karen Hutten, and Andrea Woodward. This guide is part of a habitat-based survey of non-vascular cryptogams in the Olympic Peninsula and is published cooperatively by the U.S. Geological Survey, Canon U.S.A., Inc., the National Park Foundation, Olympic National Park, and the Northwest Interpretive Association. Copies are available from the Seattle (206-553-4270) or Portland (503-221-6217) U.S. Government Printing Office bookstores. McCune's report follows.

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The rain-drenched mountains and valleys of the Olympic Peninsula are covered by a jungle growing on a jungle. This small, attractive, spiral-bound field guide helps people to see the jungle on top—the mosses, liverworts, and lichens. In northwest Washington lichens and mosses seem to sprout from any object moving slower than one mile per hour.

A short introductory section orients novices making their first excursion into this minute world. Topics include structure and reproduction of lichens and bryophytes, their human uses, and their important roles in the ecosystem.

The main part of the 109-page book features 101 species, with mentions of 140 more. Featured species are illustrated with a good-quality color close-up photograph, ecological notes, the elevation range of its habitats, and pointers for distinguishing similar species. The species are grouped by substrates: forest floor, logs, conifers, hardwoods, streamsides, and rock.

An accessible, inexpensive, color-illustrated book like this should open a new realm for lots of people. It should help park managers and naturalists understand and appreciate these components of biodiversity that are increasingly recognized for their indicator value and contributions to the ecosystem. This book should be sold in every bookstore, interpretive center, and gift shop on the Olympic Peninsula. Many people nearby in the Vancouver-Seattle-Portland swath will find it useful, too.

I hope this book will inspire similar efforts for other wild remnants of the continent, especially those with conspicuous mosses and lichens, such as the north country of Minnesota, the Acadian mountains and shore, the Appalachians, the swamps and sand ridges of Florida, the alpine tundra of Colorado, the forests of the northern Rockies, and of course the Alaskan mountains and tundra.