

The Wonders of Moss

Mosses are a very large family of plants, containing more than 12,000 species, and while the largest species can reach almost two feet high most of them are small – less than an inch is typical.

What is a Moss Plant?

Moss are categorized as bryophytes, which are non-vascular plants. While technically moss is a plant, it lacks the parts of a plant that we are used to seeing. It does not have true leaves, branches or even roots. Since moss has no roots, it must find other ways to absorb water and therefore it is frequently found in damp, shady areas.



Moss also does not have seeds like many other plants do. They spread by spore or division.

Moss tends to grow in colonies, with several plants growing closely together, which creates the nice, smooth carpet-like appearance that makes moss gardens so beautiful.

Variety of Mosses



Variety of Lichens



Youtube - [Identifying and collecting Moss](#)

Youtube - [How to build a Moss Terrarium](#)

What is the Difference Between Lichen and Moss?

What is the difference?

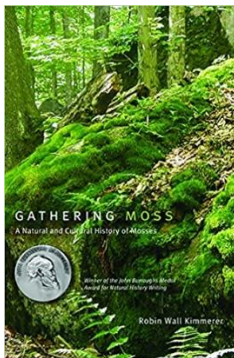
Mosses and lichens are often confused, in part because many common names for lichens include the word “moss.” In fact, the two organisms are radically different and are not even in the same kingdom. Both are fascinating organisms, often overlooked because they are small and not very showy. They grow all over the world and are used for dyes, animal fodder, ornamentation, medicines, and religious practices.

They grow only in a clean environment free of lead. They develop slowly, only 3mm every year. I will think twice before I burn it or remove it from its habitat!

World War 1 and Sphagnum Moss:

Isaac Bayley Balfour was a Scottish systematist specializing in Sino-Himalayan plants. He enjoyed a long and exceptionally distinguished academic career yet he was knighted, in 1920, “for services in connection with the war”. Together with an Edinburgh surgeon, Charles Cathcart, he had discovered in 1914 something well known to German doctors; dried Sphagnum (bog moss) makes highly absorptive, antiseptic wound dressings. Balfour directed the expertise and resources of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (of which he was Keeper), towards the identification of the most useful Sphagnum species in Britain and the production of leaflets telling collectors where to find the moss in Scotland. By 1918 over one million such dressings were used by British hospitals each month. Cathcart's Edinburgh organisation, which received moss before making it into dressings, proved a working model soon adopted in Ireland, and later in both Canada and the United States.

Book to read:



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How to Grow an Indoor Moss Garden

[Do it yourself Moss garden](#)

Flanders Moss: [The Story of Flanders Moss](#)

The Earth really does move when you step out onto Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve (NNR). Formed on the Carse of Stirling over 8000 years ago, Flanders Moss is one of the last fragile



remnants of the great bogs that once covered much of Scotland. It is now one of the largest lowland raised bogs in Britain and one of the most intact raised bogs in Europe. Flanders' sheer size has been key to its survival over the years.



Trees sometimes provide a home for moss above ground level. Trees covered in moss are very striking to look at and the moss itself form part of an ecosystem with the tree at its centre. Moss on trees makes an interesting focus for field and to learn [More about Moss on trees](#) follow the link.

Who would have thought there is so much to learn about moss! [Woodland Trust talks about Moss](#)