



Lichens of North America

By Irwin M. Brodo, Ms. Sylvia Duran Sharnoff, Stephen Sharnoff

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Lichens are a unique form of plant life, the product of a symbiotic association between an alga and a fungus. The beauty and importance of lichens have long been overlooked, despite their abundance and diversity in most parts of North America and elsewhere in the world. This stunning book—the first accessible and authoritative guidebook to lichens of the North American continent—fills the gap, presenting superb color photographs, descriptions, distribution maps, and keys for identifying the most common, conspicuous, or ecologically significant species.

The book focuses on 805 foliose, fruticose, and crustose lichens (the latter rarely included in popular guidebooks) and presents information on another 700 species in the keys or notes; special attention is given to species endemic to North America. A comprehensive introduction discusses the biology, structure, uses, and ecological significance of lichens and is illustrated with 90 additional color photos and many line drawings. English names are provided for most species, and the book also includes a glossary that explains technical terms. This visually rich and informative book will open the eyes of nature lovers everywhere to the fascinating world of lichens.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This remarkable compendium, the first (and perhaps last) of its kind, gathers current knowledge on the North American continent's store of lichens--those hard-to-classify, symbiotic composites of fungi and other organisms such as algae and cyanobacteria.

Lichens are, admittedly, easy enough to overlook. They stand out in most people's minds only as the orange, green, or grayish patches that festoon rocks and trees in mountain regions. But they are far more widespread than that, writes research scientist Irwin Brodo. Nearly every bioregion has a complement, and the continent as a whole boasts nearly 3,600 species (of about 14,000 worldwide). The first part of this book offers a near-encyclopedic survey of these lichens' form, structure, reproductive patterns, physiology, and ecological role. The second is a keyed guide to the continent's genera and major groups, including descriptions, range maps, and photographs, the last by the noted nature photographers Sylvia and Stephen Sharnoff.

Though far too hefty to serve easily in the field, this fine book deserves a place in the collections of natural historians and plant biologists doing work just about anywhere in North America. --*Gregory McNamee*

From Library Journal

Lichens are a combination of a fungus and an alga but have a unique structure and appearance quite different from either. Existing worldwide and growing on a variety of surfaces, including rocks, soil, and trees, they may appear leafy, shrubby, mossy, crusty, or jellylike and are seen in a wide range of colors, from brilliant oranges, yellows, and reds to dull grays and browns. This huge new book, written by a world authority on lichens and emeritus research scientist at the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, provides information on about 1500 of the roughly 3600 recognized North American lichens. Part 1 introduces lichens in 14 clearly written chapters that discuss their biology, ecology, geography, environmental roles, and collection. Part 2, the heart of the book, is a guide that offers identification keys to groups, genera, and species and their descriptions, with accompanying photographs and North American distribution maps. The more than 900 truly beautiful, full-color photos were taken by the Sharnoffs, nature photographers whose work has been widely published in National Geographic, Smithsonian, and elsewhere. Of value to professionals and amateurs alike, this book is certain to be a classic reference for decades to come. Highly recommended for academic and research libraries and for public libraries where interest warrants; libraries needing only a brief yet informative introduction to lichens should consider William Purvis's inexpensive Lichens (Smithsonian Institution, 2000). William H. Wiese, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames

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Review

"A long-sought triumph, gorgeously illustrated, accurate, accessible, and comprehensive." -- *Lynn Margulis, University of Massachusetts*

"Lichens of North America is one of the great natural history books of this or any age" -- *David Ehrenfeld, Rutgers*

"There is wonder and mystery aplenty in this magnificent compilation." -- *David Suzuki, University of*

British Columbia

"This is a book to love. It will open a whole new world for naturalists, professional and amateur, to explore and enjoy." -- *E. O. Wilson*

"This volume is the twenty-first-century lichen equivalent of Audubon's *Birds of America*." -- *Thomas E. Lovejoy, Smithsonian Institution*

A technically splendid catalogue that will not soon be matched...[An] accessible, informative visual masterpiece. -- *Samuel Hammer, American Scientist*

[A] beautiful first-of-its-kind introduction to...lichen... [With] intimate, delicate, colour portraits...for people of all interests... -- *Toronto Globe & Mail*

[A] photo-illustrated guide that should not be overlooked...lavish... Every person interested in natural history should have a copy. -- *Paula T. DePriest, Science*

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