

Preface for Volume 27

The bryophyte volumes of *Flora of North America North of Mexico* (FNA) have been informally and collectively known during their long gestation as the Bryophyte Flora of North America (BFNA). The BFNA is intended to provide up-to-date synoptic coverage of all bryophyte species of the North American continent and Greenland, with approximately one of every three species illustrated. This is the first of three volumes. Most acrocarpous mosses will be in Vol. 27, the remainder and all pleurocarpous mosses in Vol. 28, and hornworts and liverworts in Vol. 29. Introductory chapters will be distributed among all three volumes. Keys to all genera are planned for the second volume (mosses) and the third (hornworts and liverworts).

Inclusion of the bryophytes in FNA expands its scope to that of a green-land-plant flora, and brings bryology from a specialist field into the mainstream. We are particularly indebted to E. G. Britton (1858–1934), who in the early 1900s organized a small group of bryologists who contributed several treatments on the mosses for the *North American Flora* series (N. L. Britton et al. 1905+), an early essay at presenting keys and descriptions of all continental species in the context of a green-land-plant flora, in that case including Mexico but excluding Greenland. BFNA builds on the work of generations of bryologists, and is intended to replace standards of similar scope such as A. J. Grout's (1928–1940) *Moss Flora of North America*, which itself replaced C. L. Lesquereux and T. P. James' (1884) *Manual of the Mosses of North America*, and T. C. Frye and L. Clark's (1937–1947) *Hepaticae of North America*. Several highly regarded regional floras, often cited in the present treatments, are of considerable importance, and their consultation may give the student additional information and alternative taxonomic perspectives.

Given the need for examination of many anatomical details in identification of bryophytes, which are often tiny to begin with, the illustrations are complex and dense. The introductory chapter on morphology explains many features of the illustrations. Most illustrative panels include figures of at least some of the following: habit, peristome, operculum, calyptra, stem section, propagula (e.g., gemmae and brood bodies), cauline and perichaetial leaves, details of leaf apex, medial cells, and basal cells, and costal section. With familiarity, the student can recognize these without special labeling. Although most vascular plants can be identified with the aid of a hand-lens, generally both a dissecting and a compound microscope are needed for bryophyte identification. All illustrations are new and drawn from author-provided material by P. M. Eckel.

The bryophyte volumes differ to some extent from those concerning vascular plants, largely involving morphological differences associated with life cycle and structural complexity of the gametophyte.

We acknowledge the contributions of many bryologists over the time needed to conceive, plan, and implement BFNA. The initial group of Taxon Editors consisted of W. R. Buck, M. R. Crosby, J. J. Engel, M. L. Hicks, D. G. Horton, N. G. Miller, B. M. Murray, W. D. Reese†, R. E. Stotler, B. M. Thiers, and D. H. Vitt. P. G. Davison and S. Bartholomew-Began contributed expertise at a critical time. Taxon Editors as FNA Volume 27 goes to press are M. R. Crosby, C. Delgadillo M., T. T. McIntosh, L. R. Stark, D. H. Vitt, and R. H. Zander. Although at first the effort was distributed evenly among Taxon Editors, all contributions are now managed by the Bryophyte Editorial Center, consisting largely of R. H. Zander as Lead Editor, and P. M. Eckel, as Illustrator, with Taxon Editors providing or organizing scientific review, preliminary editing, and nomenclatural expertise. The Buffalo Museum of Science is thanked for its support during 1999–2002, and the Missouri Botanical Garden has graciously provided a haven thereafter.

R. H. Zander
P. M. Eckel
Bryophyte Editorial Center
on behalf of the Bryophyte Editorial Committee