

About the Book

For more than ten years I have been working on a book on bryophyte ecology and was joined by Heinjo During, who has been very helpful in critiquing multiple versions of the chapters. But as the book progressed, the field of bryophyte ecology progressed faster. No chapter ever seemed to stay finished, hence the decision to publish online. Furthermore, rather than being a textbook, it is evolving into an encyclopedia that would be at least three volumes.

Having reached the age when I can retire whenever I want to, I no longer need be so concerned with the publish or perish paradigm. In keeping with the sharing nature of bryologists, and the need to educate the non-bryologists about the nature and role of bryophytes in the ecosystem, it seemed my personal goals could best be accomplished by publishing online. This has several advantages for me. I can choose the format I want, I can include lots of color images, and I can post chapters or parts of chapters as I complete them and update later if I find it important.

Throughout the book I have posed questions. I have even attempted to offer hypotheses for many of these. It is my hope that these questions and hypotheses will inspire students of all ages to attempt to answer these. Some are simple and could even be done by elementary school children. Others are suitable for undergraduate projects. And some will take lifelong work or a large team of researchers around the world. Have fun with them!

The Format

The decision to publish *Bryophyte Ecology* as an ebook is very recent, and I am sure I have not thought of all the complexities of publishing as I complete things, rather than in the order of the planned organization. Some chapters have been easier for me to do and some will simply need help from others.

The "book" will actually be multiple volumes, with the first being physiological ecology, but including an introduction to the broad classification of phyla and classes, morphology, structures, and life cycles. Communities, habitats, roles, and uses, among others, are in various stages of completion.

Large chapters and those with many images will be very difficult to download, so chapters will be broken into smaller segments that I shall call subchapters. Sections, chapters, and subchapters will not always be posted in order, making pagination problematic. Where possible, I will try to number sections of a chapter continuously, but at least for now, each chapter will start with page 1.

New chapters will be added as they are ready but may not cover all planned topics at the onset. Bryologists are encouraged to send me text or images for consideration, or to volunteer to write a chapter. I am considering making this like an online journal with reviewers, but that needs more planning. Your thoughts on the idea would be appreciated.

Acknowledgments

The contributors to this book are far too numerous to mention all of them by name. To my graduate students and students of bryology, I owe a debt of gratitude for their enthusiasm for this project and for helping me to write for a somewhat less than professional and experienced audience. To the members of bryonet, I thank you not only for your wonderful contributions through bryonet, but for the promptness with which I received help for my many requests for images or information or ideas, reminding me over and over what a wonderful group of people comprise bryology. From Heinjo During I received numerous helpful suggestions and encouragement to keep going. As my co-author he obtained a contract with Cambridge, which we might still use to publish this on paper. In the end, he modestly withdrew from authorship, claiming to have made no contribution, but his contributions in reading my chapters have been invaluable. To many persons I owe an immense debt of gratitude for permission to use their images. Without this wide array of choices, the book would have been of incredibly dull appearance on the web. But most of all, I owe the beauty of the book to Michael Lüth, who gave me blanket permission to use as many of his wonderful images as I wished. They have provided more than half the images used and put my own early photographic efforts to shame. Finally, I acknowledge the support of the Botanical Society of America, the International Association of Bryologists, and most of all, the Department of Biological Sciences of Michigan Technological University for sponsorship of the web version of the book. To my department chair, John Adler, I appreciate his cooperation and support in publishing this as an online book instead of a printed one. To Emil (Tiger) Groth, I owe the web layout and all the web activity needed to place the book there in an accessible and searchable form.