

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Trumpet Vine

September/October 2016

A Bi-monthly Publication for the Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County

Lichens in North America

Inside this issue:

Fall Seminar! Information 3-4

Bees in Your Backyard A Book Review Lynn Sniderman, MGV 2012

A Bunny Tale Sandy Jones, MGV 2005

The Rose More than Just a Pretty Face Kathleen Szabo, MGV 1993

Beneficial Insect Profile 9-10 Katherine Geralds, MGV 2006

11-12

Hort Tips Sandy Welches, MGV 2005 Lichens are unique in the plant world, made of a fungus and a photosynthesizing organism, creating a relationship called symbiosis. This combination proved to be an evolutionary success, with almost 14,000 species in the world. Lichens are found in diverse sizes, forms and colors, at the poles and in the tropics, on every kind of soil, tree bark and insect backs.



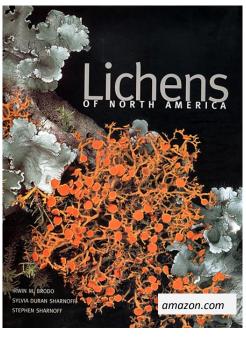


Lichens had been largely overlooked until the publication of "Lichens of North America" in 2001. This large volume contains wonderful photographs, detailed and comprehensive descriptions

and analysis. Starting with what they look like and how they function, it tells why they are found where they are, and their practical and ecological importance. The book became a go-to source book for everything lichens.

Lichens help to convert bare soil or rocks into habitats suitable for vascular plants and complex communities. Lichens that partner with blue-green algae contribute quantities of nitrogen in the ecosystems







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Page 2

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forests in Canada and the United States.

Lichens are the canary in the coalmine, being sensitive indicators of air pollution that are often absent from urban environments. They are valuable for monitoring trends in agriculture and forestry and human health.

The book was written with the hope that the information would be useful to forest managers, park personnel, teachers and air quality researchers, but also for ordinary people (master gardeners?) who appreciate the outdoor world.

The authors of "lichens for North America" were Irwin Brodo, Sylvia Sharnoff and Stephen Sharnoff.

My connection to this beautiful book is through my husband's stepbrother, Dr. Allan Stone, who helped to underwrite the publication. Allan died recently and I wanted to pay tribute to his commitment to this book and also to many other projects related to preserving the earth.

Allan was born in Cleveland in 1944. I met him in shortly after moving to Cleveland in 1968. Through his Lichen Foundation, he was a major benefactor to environmental causes in Ontario and British Columbia, where he lived to complete his medical training after graduating from CWRU Medical School. He actively supported and participated in several environmental organizations, served on the Board of the World Wildlife Fund, Canada (WWF) and was involved with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. One of his major personal projects and innovations was to buy large tracts of land adjacent to the Bruce Peninsula National Park near Tobermory, which he then donated to expand and buffer this wilderness area.