

PEAT MOSS
Sphagnum spp

Located in bogs throughout the Division. This genus forms the basic building block in bog formation: annual growth building up layer upon layer of peat. Such peat mats may extend out over open water, producing floating bogs. Prudence is dictated when walking in such areas. By exchanging hydrogen ions for other actions, *Sphagnum* produces the acid conditions characteristic of most bogs. This in turn has a limiting effect on the other species which compete for space in the bog. Thus, most species must be adapted not only to water-logged "soils", but to the acid condition of the environment.

Specific identification of this species is not attempted. The following general description is offered.

Robust mosses which often form large, deep hummocks.



Stems erect with numerous branches crowded near the tips in a head-like tuft. Branches spirally arranged around stem. Branch leaves spiralling around the branch stem. Stem leaves less crowded than branch leaves. Reproductive spores enclosed in dark brown or black, elevated capsules on slender leafless elongations of the tip of the fruiting branch. The spores are discharged and dispersed by an audible explosion of the capsule.