Should mosses have common names? Part 3.
The Common Names of the Primitive Orders

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Although many of the more primitive mosses discussed in this issue are either small or uncommon, a surprising number have common names. Included here are the Andreaeales, Archidiales, Fissidentales, Bryoxiphiales, and Schistostegales. One reason for the abundance of names is that these mosses represent unusual and distinctive mosses, such as the blackish Andreaea, the feather-like Fissidens, the small soil-dwelling Archidium, the highly distinctive Bryoxiphium that has reminded the Japanese of a shrimp, and the luminous Schistostega.

This availability of names is in spite of the fact that only Fissidens out of this group seems to have had any sort of economic importance. The Chinese have used it as an antibiotic to cure a swollen throat (Ding 1982), although no scientific evidence is available to support this use. Fissidens serves another medical use in China by serving as host for the aphid that is responsible for the Chinese gallnut so widely used as both a food and a medicine (Tang 1976).

Unlike the North Americans, who have avoided common names, the Japanese and Chinese have created names for every taxon. Many of these are literal translations of the Latin names, but many provide interesting mental images of the moss they describe, such as the shrimp moss (Bryoxiphium norvegicum) or royal fern moss (Fissidens osmundoides). Others require explanation to be understood in the western world. For example, the Chinese phoenix moss refers to a large bird with a beautiful long tail, referring to the feather-like shape of Fissidens.

Schistostega pennata has names that refer to its cave-dwelling habit and its capability of reflecting small quantities of light in a way that make it appear to be luminous. The Japanese have a monument to this moss in Hokkaido, and a Japanese opera has been based on folklore involving the glow the moss made behind the head of a

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fisherman who had taken shelter with his starving shipmates in a cave.

Some names seem to represent conflicting interpretations of the same moss. For example, in North America, *Andreaea nivalis* was named red rock moss, whereas in Japan it was named a black moss.

Conventions in formatting follow Glime (1989). Beginning with this list the nomenclature will follow that being prepared by Howard Crum and Louis Anderson for a new North American checklist. We thank Howard Crum for permission to use it and Diana Horton for a copy of the names on disk.

*Andreaea*: (for Andreae of Germany)\(^9\); rock mosses\(^2\); split moss\(^8\); kurogoko = black moss\(^3\); black moss\(^4\)

*Andreaea blyttii* Schimp.: Blytt’s black moss\(^1\)

*Andreaea crassinervia* Bruch: thick-nerved rock moss\(^3\)

*Andreaea nivalis* Hook.: red rock moss\(^5\); tall slender split moss\(^8\); snow moss\(^3\);

Gassan kurogoko = Mt. Gassan black moss\(^3\)

*Andreaea rothii* Web. & Mohr: black falcate split moss\(^8\); black falcate andreaea\(^2\)

*Andreaea rapestris* Hedw.: black rock moss\(^5\); rock split moss\(^8\); black mountain moss\(^3\); kurogoko = black moss\(^3\)

*Andreaeobryum*: no names found

*Archidium*: tuchi-goke = soil (or earth) moss\(^3\)

*Archidium alternifolium* (Hedw.) Schimp.: clay moss\(^3\)

*Archidium ohiense* Schimp. ex C. Muell.: Tokyo soil moss\(^3\)

*Fissidens*: (split tooth, referring to the peristome)\(^9\); plume mosses\(^2\); flat fork mosses\(^7\); Chinese phoenix moss\(^3\); plume moss, split-leaf moss\(^6\); split-toothed mosses\(^3\)

*Fissidens adiantoides* Hedw.: maiden hair moss\(^2\); adiantum-like fork moss\(^8\); fern-like flat moss\(^3\); shiny beak Chinese phoenix moss\(^3\); maiden-hair split-toothed moss\(^6\)

*Fissidens bryoides* Hedw.: common flat fork moss\(^7\); lesser pennate-leaved fork moss\(^8\); common flat moss\(^3\); Hokkaido Chinese phoenix moss, child Chinese phoenix moss\(^3\); small split-toothed moss\(^7\); common flat fork-moss\(^1\)

*Fissidens exilis* Hedw.: slender flat moss\(^3\)

*Fissidens grandifrons* Brid.: narrow-leafed Chinese phoenix moss\(^3\)

*Fissidens hyalinus* Wils. & Hook.: Satsuma Chinese phoenix moss (Satsuma is a place in Japan)\(^3\)

*Fissidens microcladus* Thwaites & Mitt.: Garber Chinese phoenix moss\(^3\)

*Fissidens osmundoides* Hedw.: alpine flat moss\(^3\); royal fern moss\(^3\)

*Fissidens taxifolius* Hedw.: yew-leaved fork moss\(^7\); yew-like fork moss\(^8\); yew-leaved flat moss\(^3\); yew-leaved moss\(^3\); yew-leaved split-toothed moss\(^7\); yew-leaved flat fork-moss\(^3\)

*Bryoxiphium norvegicum* (Brid.) Mitt.: sword moss\(^1\), shrimp moss\(^3\)
Schistostega pennata (Hedw.) Web. & Mohr: luminous moss; feather cavern moss; cave moss, goblin gold; shining moss, cavern moss

12 Dr. Zen Iwatsuki (personal communication)
13 Jinkun Zhang (personal communication)

Literature cited
