

Etymological notes on lichen names. Part 2.

Carl Sumner Knopf has described biological etymology as "a veritable romance of linguistic adventure where research leads across seas and sands to natural habitats and original appellations". This second series of notes perhaps illustrates how detection and quest are the air the etymologist breathes.

8. Belonia nidarosiensis Like needles from Trondheim.

Derivation: belone (Greek) = a sharp point or needle (aptly descriptive of the long, thin spores of some species in the genus, e.g. B.russula; in B.nidarosiensis best applied to the long, sharp pointed tips of the spores).
nidrosia(Latin) = Trondheim, mid-Norway.

9. Chaenotheca ferruginea With gaping capsules, and rusty red.

Derivation: chaino (Greek) = I yawn, gape (a later present tense form of chasko).
theke(Greek) = case, container, box, chest; applied to the capsule of a moss.
ferrugineus (Latin) = light brown with some red admixture.

10. Hypogymnia physodes With the underside bare, and bladder-like.

Derivation: hypo - (Greek prefix) = below, under.
gymnos (Greek) = naked, unclad.
physa (Greek)"= air, air-bubble(used in the plural by Plato for wind in the stomach).
-odes(Greek suffix) = like, resembling.

11. Icmadophila ericetorum Lover of moisture and dweller in heaths.

Derivation: ikmas(Greek) = juice, moisture.
phileo(Greek) = I love, like.
erica(Latin) = heath.

12. Porina aenea Dotted with tiny holes and of a bronzed hue.

Derivation: poros(Greek) = passage (NB later Latin = small hole).
-inus (Latin suffix) = having, like.
aeneus (Latin) = of copper or bronze, brazen.

13. Rinodina exigua Huge-shielded, but paltry in aspect.

Derivation: riños (Greek) = a hide, skin (hence) a shield.
deinos (Greek) = awesome, terrible, huge.
exiguus (Latin) = inconsiderable, mean; probably referring to the small fruits of this species (or the sometimes ill-developed thallus).

14. Sarcopyrenia gibba With fleshy, pored fruits in swollen humps.

Derivation: sarx (Greek) = flesh, body.
pyren (Greek) = fruit-stone, kernel; here most probably applied in the mycological sense descriptive of a perithecium.
gibba (Latin) = a hump, swelling.

15. Thelotrema lepadinum With bored out pustules, each of them haltered.

Derivation: thele (Greek) = nipple, teat.
trema (Greek) = perforation, orifice, borehole.
lepadnon (Greek) = a broad leather harness strap, fastening yoke to neck, and passing between forelegs to girth.

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Country Diary: A day on Ben Lawers 1986

For the last few days we've been completely absorbed in lichens. Eating to gain energy to search for them, watching the weather for gaps in the rain to look for them, sleeping well only when it is impossible to hunt for them, even asleep remembering not to roll over and crush the packets which cover the floor of our little tents. I don't know if I'm lucky to be able to give such complete concentration to a subject or not.

Modern tents are highly sensitive 'rainometers', the tent fly-sheet acting as a drum which makes even drizzle sound quite heavy. As I drifted into consciousness there was an unfamiliar silence, so I stuck my head through the flap and could hardly believe our luck; a calm Lochan-na-Cat sat in a sunlit landscape and not a cloud in sight. It was only 5.30 am but I called to the others that it was a superb day and time to get up. Gradually tent zips opened and soon we were brewing tea and having a quick bowl of muesli. By 6.30, brimful of anticipation, we were heading for