

## Notes

1. A Kayapó community located in Pukatoti in the lower course of the Sinho river in the south of the State of Pará in the early 1930s.
2. *Fundação Nacional do Índio*.
3. *Serviço de Proteção ao Índio*.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## References

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**Mosses et lichens. 290 espèces faciles à identifier**, by Volkmar Wirth, Ruprecht Düll and Steffen Caspari. Édition française, Paris, Delachaux et Niestlé SA, 2021, 336 pp., €35.90 (hardback), ISBN 978-2-603-02670-0

The world of mosses and lichens is very fascinating, both for the wide variety of species, morphologies and colours, and for their curious traditional uses. Being such small organisms, they are often thought to be difficult to identify. Accordingly, the Italian poet, writer and lichenologist Camillo Sbarbaro (1888–1967) believed that ‘greeting by sight and by name the inconspicuous and neglected lichens can help to make them alive’ (‘gli incospicui e negletti licheni, a salutarli a vista per nome, pare di aiutarli a vivere’) [1].

I am sure that this field guide, with its educational approach, completed by many beautiful pictures, will be able to bring a vast and curious public closer to the secret world of mosses and lichens, allowing everyone to give them a name. For each of the two groups of species, an introduction describes their general characteristics and how to collect and preserve the specimens, and it provides a simplified identification key. Further, the book gives a detailed description of each species, its ecology and distribution, and useful tips to distinguish it from similar ones.

It is no coincidence that this scientific book includes both mosses and lichens. Even though they belong to two different Phyla, in public awareness these groups of

organisms are always considered together and confused with each other, especially if one pays them superficial attention. This confusion is ancient and arises from the fact that they often share the same environments and the same substrates. In addition, in the past, they were included among the so called ‘lower plants’, defined also as ‘cryptogams’ that means ‘hidden reproduction’, referring to the fact that they reproduce by spores, without flowers or seeds. And thus, the lichen *Evernia prunastri*, used for the preparation of cosmetic products such as soaps, lotions, deodorants and perfumes, becomes oak-moss (in French ‘mousse du chêne’, in Italian: ‘muschio bianco’), and the similar *Pseudevernia furfuracea* is called tree-moss (in French ‘mousse d’arbre’, in Italian: ‘muschio nero’) [2]. Similarly, the reindeer lichen *Cladonia rangiferina*, which is a basic food for these animals (they consume 2 kg of dry weight per day!), is also known as Icelandic moss (in French: ‘mousse islandaise’).

The ‘à savoir’ section offers plentiful detail about these and many other uses of lichens and mosses in medicine and perfumery and as environmental indicators (e.g. in the assessment of air pollution and water regulation). Also to be appreciated is the pocket format of this guide which can support the reader, now enthusiastic, on his field trips. At the same time, however, it is an elegant book to be displayed in the well-stocked library of the naturalist.

## References

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**Six legs walking: notes from an entomological life**, by Elizabeth Bernays, Clearwater, Florida, Raised Voice Press, 2019, 175 pp., \$16.95, (pbk), ISBN 978-1-9492-5903-2

Last autumn, this book got the 2020 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award for Autobiography/Memoir. That is well deserved. It is a captivating mix of personal memoirs and science, showing that it is hard to separate the one from the other. What motivates a scientist can be a rather inexplicable number of childhood experiences, chance meetings and inspiring environments, of nature as well as human beings.

Elizabeth Bernays is an entomologist, now professor emerita at the University of Arizona, well known for her studies in insect-plant interactions, especially with regard to the tritrophic relationship of plant-herbivore-predator which she has shown is important in evolution. Her fundamental question was: ‘Plant-eating insects and their host plants make up 50% of all species of life (...), and most of these insect species specialize on just one or a few species of plants. Why?’ Earlier, the generally accepted idea was that plant chemistry is by far the most important factor in herbivorous insect specialisation.