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BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY BULLETIN

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The substrates present are as follows:-

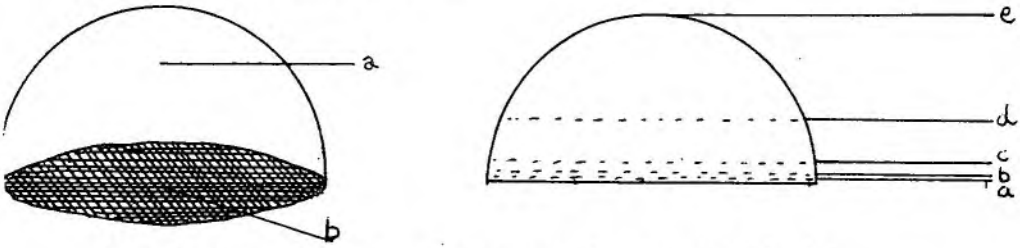
1. Lignum - mostly wooden kennels.(33 species).
2. Trees - Crataegus, Fraxinus, Quercus, Salix, Sambucus.(21 spp).
3. Wooden rails (corticate).(9 spp).
4. Concrete - paths, posts, walls and blocks on ground. (23 spp).
5. Corrugated asbestos-cement roofs.(24 spp).
6. Red asbestos-cement roofing tiles.(13 spp).
7. Roofing felt.(13 spp).
8. Red siliceous roofing tiles on ground. (9 spp).
9. Soil over uprooted stump. (1 spp).

Dr B.J. Coppins is thanked for determining critical material.

Peter Earland-Bennett

APPROACHES TO LICHEN AESTHETICS 3

The analytic approaches to lichen structure made so far in this series (Bulletins 60 and 61) have indicated the aesthetic importance of lichen modes of spatial occupation. We shall now begin a more systematic analysis of lichen structural diversity and the variety of aesthetic effects arising from it. For the present, our examination will be limited to individual thalli. Lichens in number, in community, and in their environmental context will be a later concern of this series.



On left View of a) the hemispheric domain with b) the planar, circular base. On right Cross-section through figure 1, showing upper levels of intrusion into the Hemispheric domain by different lichen types, a) thin crustose, b) thick crustose/placodioid, c) foliose, d) subfruticose, and e) fruticose.

An obvious feature of lichen diversity is the range of thalline morphology from crustose to fruticose. These two growth forms with their intermediates (placodioid, foliose and subfruticose) present a wide array of thalline forms. Observing this range of forms, we can stipulate two ideal extremes, one at either end of the range. We can visualise (figure 1) the crustose thallus tending towards the imaginary limit of a circular plane, and the fruticose thallus tending towards an intricately branched matrix spreading through a hemispherical domain (cf Bulletin 60 p. 5, Note). On a cross-section through this hemisphere (figure 1) we can represent in simplified form the degree of ascending occupation of the hemispheric domain typical of the lichen types listed in the following hierarchy, ordered by level of intrusion into the hemispheric space.

a) thin crustose (or leprose)
b) thick crustose/placodioid
c) foliose
d) subfruticose
e) fruticose (reaching the upper boundary of the hemispheric domain)

Even the thinnest of crustose lichens is more than two-dimensional, but intrusion into the three-dimensional domain on the part of such a plant is plainly minimal, whereas that on the part of the most intricately branched fruticose forms is maximal. A hierarchy of lichen spatial occupation in no way implies an aesthetic value-judgement, but is a recognition that the thalline morphology of a lichen is a decisive constituent in its particular aesthetic impact. Indeed, we could compare a crustose thallus to a painted canvas, a foliose plant to a moulded relief, a subfruticose plant to an in-depth collage, and a fruticose plant to a sculpture proper. We note, too, the interfluidity of these basic lichen types, which we shall examine when we come to a more detailed analysis of thalline structural elements.

A. Henderson