mosses of dry forests
in south eastern Australia

by Cassia Read and Bernard Slattery

A guide for students and absolute beginners - technically accurate, but free of technical language - this is an attempt to present a little known part of the plant kingdom to a new audience.

dozens of species described, most with multiple illustrations, sample page overleaf

The guide contains an introduction explaining the life cycle of mosses and their importance in the ecosystem; tips on how to approach identification; detailed descriptions of common, striking species; and appendices carefully distinguishing mosses from liverworts and lichens.

Underpinning its publication is the belief that mosses are, before anything else, beautiful: a lot of joy is to be had in exploring this minute dimension of the natural world.

This is a community project of the Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests
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POLYTRICHUM JUNIPERINUM

Colonies resemble forests of miniature pine seedlings (to 3 cm tall) and are common on exposed soils, often in disturbed areas of native forest. Leaves are sharp, spreading and feel quite prickly. They have a brown/red tip. With a hand lens you can see the leaves appear bordered with shiny strips (these are colourless leaf margins folded inwards). The nerve is very broad. Capsules are common. When immature they stand erect on tall red stalks, each covered with a light coloured ‘woven’ hood. Mature capsules resemble tiny, roughly squared drums.

As it dries: Leaves brown and press to the stem so plants look like tiny brown artists’ brushes.

Similar species: Dawsonia longiseta has a dense covering of pink hairs on its hood and a white peristome extending from its mature capsule. Dawsonia leaves are not as sharp nor are the leaf margins folded inwards.

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