

October 2009

Plant Parade Amazing Moss



As you wander through the woods and fields of Chippewa Nature Center, you need only look around to find little green carpets scattered here and there on the ground, rocks, and trees.

Mosses are members of a group of plants called **bryophytes**. They differ from other plants in that they lack *vascular tissue*, or the tubes that transport water and nutrients. Instead mosses absorb water and nutrients from rain water, dew, and dust. The rhizoids that anchor them absorb only a small amount of water and nutrients, most is absorbed through the body of the plant, which is only one cell thick.

Mosses can be found in a variety of environments. They are important in the process of *primary succession*, or the colonization of bare surfaces by plants. They can grow on sand and solid rock or in extremely cold or hot places. They thrive here at Chippewa Nature Center where you can find them in hot, sandy areas like our meadows and in our cool, moist forests.



Little Lichens

Lichens are not a single organism, but instead the result of a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and green algae, a fungus and cyanobacteria, or a fungus and both green algae and cyanobacteria.

The fungus provides the structure in which the algae



or bacteria live. The algae and bacteria provide carbohydrates and sometimes nitrogen to the fungus.

The algae and bacteria can often be found in nature separate from the fungus, but the fungus is rarely found without the algae or cyanobacteria.



Each unique lichen is named and classified based on its fungal component.

Visit the Visitor Center trailer for program information.