

Forestry Commission Booklet No. 1 (Woodland Mosses). London,
H.M.S.O., 2 /-.

In this, the first of a new series dealing with subjects of importance to foresters, two pages are devoted to a description with photographic illustrations of 20 moss species considered as useful indicators of woodland conditions. An attempt is made to indicate the soil and climatic conditions under which these mosses are found.

The booklet will be particularly welcomed by those students of vegetation who have a reasonable grasp of the identification of the flowering plants but who have been deterred from a study of the mosses by the absence of a suitable introductory or elementary work.

The remarks on soil and climatic conditions are on the whole sketchy but suggestive. It is admitted frankly that this section is limited by present knowledge, but it should be emphasised from the start that mosses are much more sensitive indicators of local climate (or micro-climate) than flowering plants. They are most useful too in showing the nature of the woodland humus and course of its decomposition, an important point in new coniferous forests. On the other hand we must still rely on the flowering plants and on examination of the soil profile if we are to learn anything of conditions beneath the actual surface which are so decisive for tree growth.

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