

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.

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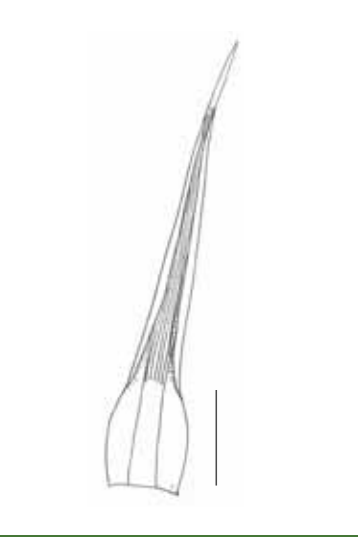
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POLYTRICHUM JUNIPERINUM

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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