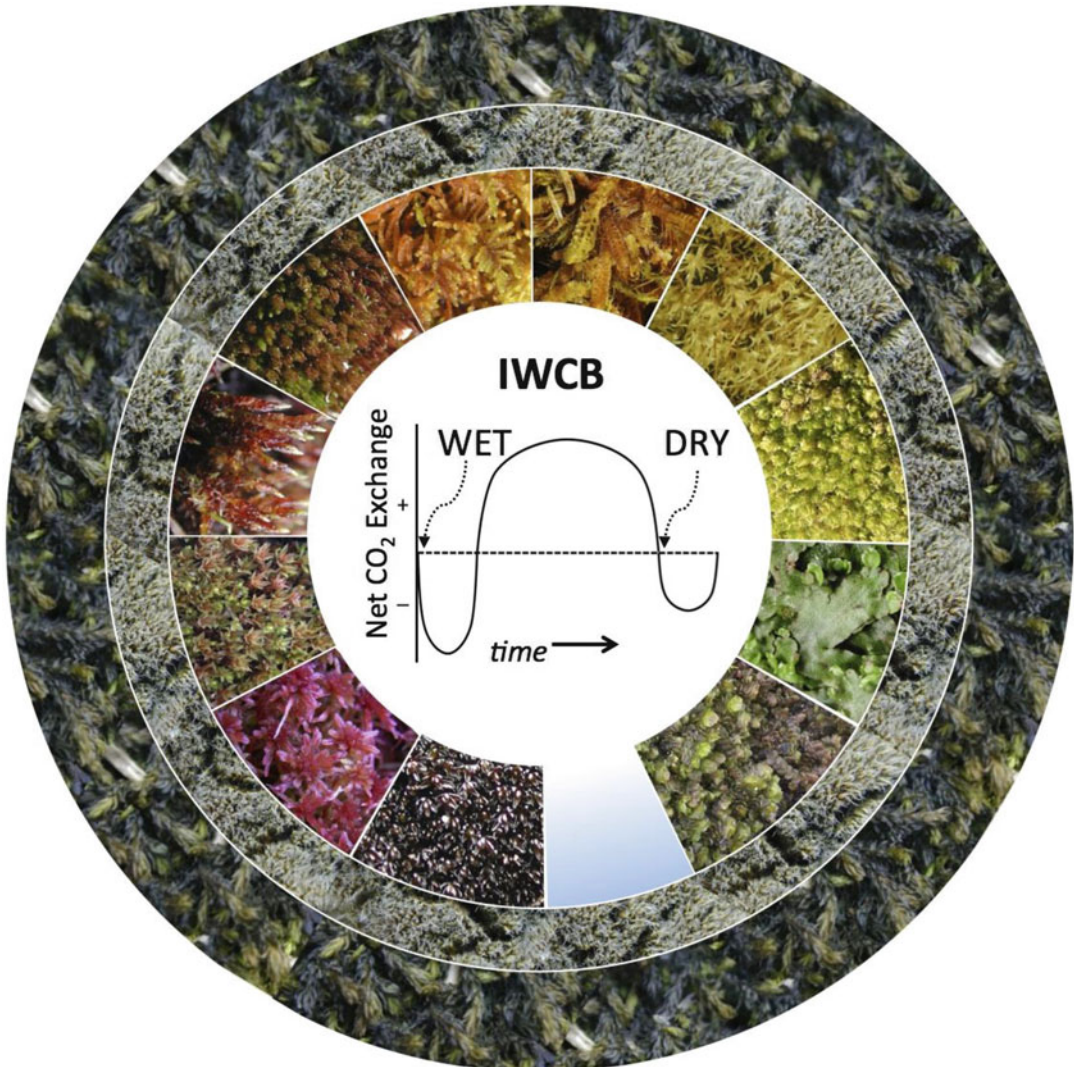


Advances in Photosynthesis and Respiration 37
Including Bioenergy and Related Processes

David T. Hanson
Steven K. Rice *Editors*

Photosynthesis in Bryophytes and Early Land Plants

Photosynthesis in Bryophytes and Early Land Plants



Bryophyte Color Wheel Bryophytes present diverse photosynthetic physiology and morphology, as evidenced by differences in the organization of the shoot system and by their varied pigmentation. Yet the vast majority are desiccation tolerant, represented by the Integrated Water-Carbon Budget (IWCB) model showing the photosynthetic response following hydration of a dry bryophyte (see Coe et al., Chap. 16, this volume). Bryophytes are arranged on a color wheel starting from the red on the left above the horizontal and progressing clockwise through orange, yellow, green, blue and violet with secondary colors also shown. No known bryophyte expresses blue pigmentation. Clockwise from red, species shown include *Calliergon sarmentosum*, *Bryum muehlenbeckii*, *Cratoneuron commutatum*, *Barbilophozia floerkei*, *Barbula enderesii*, *Bryum capillare*, *Conocephalum conicum*, *Frullania dilatata*, *Andreaea alpestris*, *Sphagnum warnstorffii* and *Bryum arcticum*, with *Grimmia funalis* in the white ring and *Cinclidotus riparius* in the black ring. Photographs by Michael Lüth and composition by Steven Rice.

Advances in Photosynthesis and Respiration Including Bioenergy and Related Processes

VOLUME 37

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The book series *ADVANCES IN PHOTOSYNTHESIS AND RESPIRATION Including Bioenergy and Related Processes* provides a comprehensive and state-of-the-art account of research in photosynthesis, respiration and related processes. Virtually all life on our planet Earth ultimately depends on photosynthetic energy capture and conversion to energy-rich organic molecules. These are used for food, fuel, and fiber. Photosynthesis is the source of almost all bioenergy on Earth. The fuel and energy uses of photosynthesized products and processes have become an important area of study, and competition between food and fuel has led to resurgence in photosynthesis research. This series of books spans topics from physics to agronomy and medicine; from femtosecond processes through season-long production to evolutionary changes over the course of the history of the Earth; from the photophysics of light absorption, excitation energy transfer in the antenna to the reaction centers, where the highly-efficient primary conversion of light energy to charge separation occurs, through the electrochemistry of intermediate electron transfer, to the physiology of whole organisms and ecosystems; and from X-ray crystallography of proteins to the morphology of organelles and intact organisms. In addition to photosynthesis in natural systems, genetic engineering of photosynthesis and artificial photosynthesis is included in this series. The goal of the series is to offer beginning researchers, advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, and even research specialists, a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of the remarkable advances across the full scope of research on photosynthesis and related energy processes. The purpose of this series is to improve understanding of photosynthesis and plant respiration at many levels both to improve basic understanding of these important processes and to enhance our ability to use photosynthesis for the improvement of the human condition.

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Photosynthesis in Bryophytes and Early Land Plants

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From the Series Editors

Advances in Photosynthesis and Respiration Including Bioenergy and Related Processes *Volume 37: Photosynthesis in Bryophytes and Early Land Plants*

We are delighted to announce the publication of Volume 37 in this series. This is the third volume with the new cover and enhanced web presence. The series publisher, Springer, now makes the table of contents of all of the volumes freely available online. Links to each volume are given below. Readers may also see that this volume and the past few volumes have had significantly more color and the color figures are now better integrated into the chapters, instead of being collected in one section of the book. This improvement was possible because of changes in how the books are produced. Another change is that references to chapters in books are now tracked by bibliographic services. This will help authors provide evidence of the importance of their work. We hope that these updates will maintain the importance of these edited volumes in the dissemination of the science of photosynthesis and bioenergy.

This Book

This volume, *Photosynthesis of Bryophytes and Early Land Plants*, was conceived and edited by David T. (Dave) Hanson (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA) and Steven K. (Steve) Rice (Union College, Schenectady, New York, USA). We are grateful to them for their timely submission of the book and to all the 33 authors,

who contributed to this book that describes photosynthesis in bryophytes, plants that were, perhaps, the first to colonize the land, and that today are found in some of the harshest environments on land. Often, photosynthesis research focuses on land plants such as spinach and now *Arabidopsis*. Further, most often, photosynthesis is studied in aquatic organisms such as bacteria and algae (e.g., *Chlamydomonas*). This book focuses on the evolutionary transition between aquatic photosynthesis and terrestrial photosynthesis. As plants colonized the land, water availability, intense sunlight, and diffusion of CO₂ became important issues that determined which organisms would be successful. This book describes the latest information about how land plants adapted to the aerial environment. Fascination by one of us (TDS) with this topic began when Dave Hanson worked jointly in his laboratory and that of Linda Graham (see Chap. 2, this book). He is very grateful that Dave and Steve were willing to draw together so many experts to create this valuable look at the transition of photosynthesis from aquatic environments to aerial environments.

Authors

The book contains 18 chapters written by 33 authors from 8 countries [Australia (5); Canada (1); Estonia (2); Germany (4);

UK (6); The Netherlands (1); and USA (13)]. We thank all the authors for their valuable contribution to this book; their names (arranged alphabetically) are:

Maaiké Y. **Bader** (Germany; Chap. 15); Jayne Belnap (USA; Chap. 16); Jessica Bramley-Alves (Australia; Chap. 17); Kirsten K. **Coe** (USA; Chap. 16); Martha Cook (USA; Chap. 2); J. Hans C. Cornelissen (The Netherlands; Chap. 5); David J. Cove (UK; Chap. 11); Andrew C. Cuming (UK; Chap. 11); Dianne **Edwards** (UK; Chap. 3); Lawrence B. **Flanagan** (Canada; Chap. 14); Linda **Graham** (USA; Chap. 2); Janice M. Glime (USA; Chap. 12); Tomáš **Hájek** (Czech Republic; Chap. 13); David T. Hanson (USA; Chaps. 1, 6, 10, 18); Diana H. **King** (Australia; Chap. 17); Martina Königer (USA; Chap. 8); Louise A. **Lewis** (USA; Chap. 2); Rebecca E. **Miller** (Australia; Chap. 17); Ülo **Niinemets** (Estonia; Chap. 9); Zach **Portman** (USA; Chap. 10); Michael C.F. Proctor (UK; Chap. 4); John A. **Raven** (UK; Chap. 3); Karen Renzaglia (USA; Chap. 6); Steven K. Rice (USA; Chaps. 1, 5, 10, 18); Sharon A. Robinson (Australia; Chap. 7, 17); Jed P. **Sparks** (USA; Chap. 16); Wilson **Taylor** (USA; Chap. 2); Mari Tobias (Estonia; Chap. 9); Juan Carlos **Villarreal** (Germany; Chap. 6); Sebastian **Wagner** (Germany; Chap. 15); Melinda J. Waterman (Australia; Chap. 7); Charles Wellman (UK; Chap. 2); Gerhard **Zotz** (Germany; Chap. 15).

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- **Volume 34 (2012) Photosynthesis - Plastid Biology, Energy Conversion and Carbon Assimilation**, edited by Julian Eaton-Rye, Baishnab C. Tripathy, and Thomas D. Sharkey, from New Zealand, India, and USA. Thirty-three chapters, 854 pp, Hardcover, ISBN: 978-94-007-1578-3 (HB) ISBN 978-94-007-1579-0 (e-book) [<http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-94-007-1578-3/>]
- **Volume 33 (2012): Functional Genomics and Evolution of Photosynthetic Systems**, edited by Robert L. Burnap and Willem F.J. Vermaas, from USA. Fifteen chapters, 428 pp, ISBN: 978-94-007-1532-5 [<http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-90-481-1532-5/>]
- **Volume 32 (2011): C4 Photosynthesis and Related CO2 Concentrating Mechanisms**, edited by Agepati S. Raghavendra and Rowan Sage, from India and Canada. Nineteen chapters, 425 pp, Hardcover, ISBN: 978-90-481-9406-3 [<http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-90-481-9406-3/>]
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Special 25 % discounts are available to members of the International Society of Photosynthesis Research, ISPR <http://www.photosynthesisresearch.org/>. See <http://www.springer.com/ispr>.

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- Canopy Photosynthesis: From Basics to Applications (Editors: Kouki Hikosaka, Ülo Niinemets and Niels P.R. Anten)
- Saga of Non-Photochemical Quenching (NPQ) and Thermal Energy Dissipation In Plants, Algae and Cyanobacteria (Editors:

Barbara Demmig-Adams, Győző Garab and Govindjee)

- ATP Synthase and Proton Translocation (Editor: Wayne Frasch)
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- Green Bacteria and Heliobacteria
- Interactions between Photosynthesis and Other Metabolic Processes
- Limits of Photosynthesis: Where Do We Go from Here
- Photosynthesis, Biomass and Bioenergy
- Photosynthesis under Abiotic and Biotic Stress
- Plant Respiration II

If you have any interest in editing/co-editing any of the above listed books, or being an author, please send an E-mail to Tom Sharkey at tsharkey@msu.edu. and/ or to Govindjee at gov@illinois.edu. Suggestions for additional topics are also welcome.

In view of the interdisciplinary character of research in photosynthesis and respiration, it is our earnest hope that this series of books will be used in educating students and researchers in Plant Sciences, Molecular and Cell Biology, Integrative Biology, Biotechnology, Agricultural Sciences, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Chemical Biology, Biological Physics, and Biophysics, but also in Bioengineering, Chemistry, and Physics.

We take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Dave Hanson and Steve Rice for their outstanding editorial work; they have done a fantastic job, not only in editing, but also in organizing this book for all of us, and for their highly professional dealing with the reviewing process. We thank all the 33 authors of this book (see the list above): without their authoritative chapters, there would be no such volume. We give special thanks to I. Mohamed Asif, SPi Global, India, his directing the typesetting of this book; his expertise has been crucial in bringing this book to completion. We owe Jacco Flipsen, Andre Tournois, and Ineke Ravesloot (of Springer) thanks for their friendly working relation

with us that led to the production of this book.

April 5, 2013

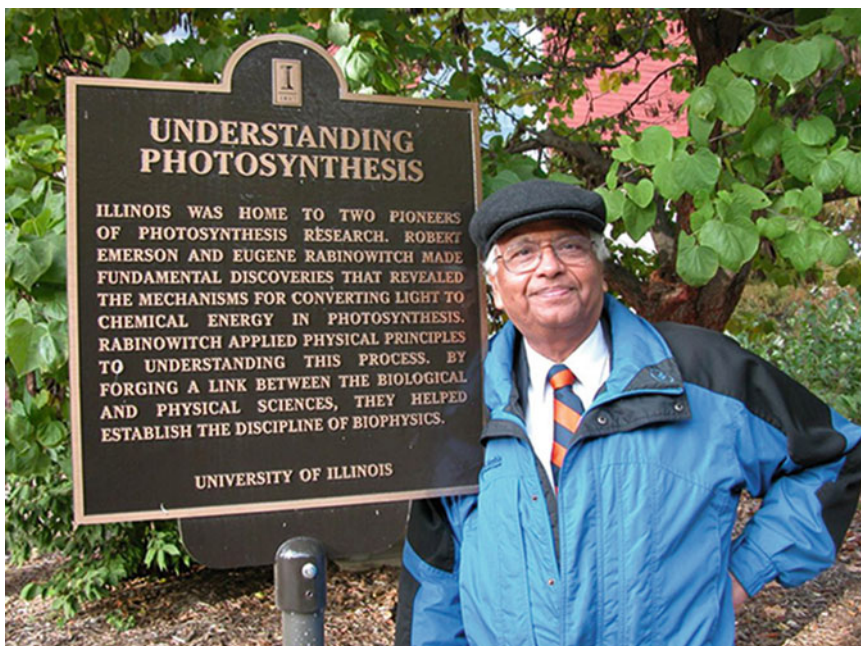
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Series Editors



Govindjee with the plaque honoring his professors Robert Emerson and Eugene Rabinowitch.

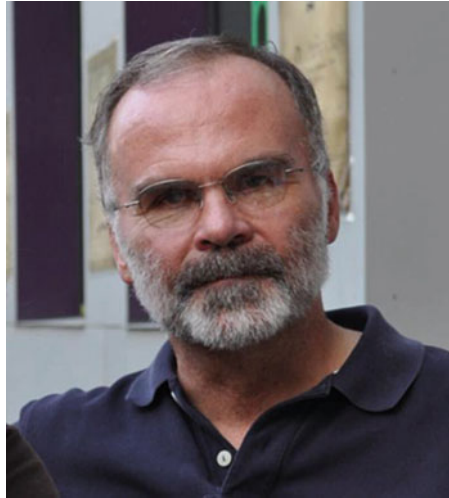
Govindjee, who uses one name only, was born on October 24, 1932, in Allahabad, India. Since 1999, he has been Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Plant Biology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), Urbana, IL, USA. He obtained his B.Sc. (Chemistry and Biology) and M.Sc. (Botany; Plant Physiology) in 1952 and 1954, from the University of Allahabad. He studied 'Photosynthesis' at the UIUC, under two pioneers of photosynthesis Robert Emerson, and Eugene Rabinowitch, obtaining his Ph.D. in 1960, in Biophysics. He is best known for his research on excitation energy transfer, light emission (prompt and delayed fluorescence, and thermoluminescence), primary photochemistry and electron transfer in

"Photosystem II" (PS II, water-plastoquinone oxido-reductase). His research, with many collaborators, has included the discovery of a short-wavelength form of chlorophyll (Chl) *a* functioning in what is now called PS II; of the two-light effect in Chl *a* fluorescence; and, with his wife Rajni Govindjee, of the two-light effect (Emerson Enhancement) in NADP reduction in chloroplasts. His major achievements, together with several other researchers, include an understanding of the basic relationship between Chl *a* fluorescence and photosynthetic reactions; an unique role of bicarbonate/carbonate on the electron acceptor side of PS II, particularly in the protonation events involving the Q_B binding region; the theory of thermoluminescence in plants; the first picosecond measurements

on the primary photochemistry of PS II; and the first use of Fluorescence Lifetime of Chl *a* fluorescence in understanding *photo-protection*, by plants, against excess light. His current focus is on the ‘History of Photosynthesis Research’, in ‘Photosynthesis Education’, as well as in the ‘Possible Existence of Extraterrestrial Life’. He has served on the faculty of the UIUC for ~40 years. Govindjee’s honors include: Fellow of the American Association of Advancement of Science (AAAS); Distinguished Lecturer of the School of Life Sciences, UIUC; Fellow and Lifetime member of the National Academy of Sciences (India); President of the American Society for Photobiology (1980–1981); Fulbright Scholar (1956), Fulbright Senior Lecturer (1997), and Fulbright Specialist (2012); Honorary President of the 2004 International Photosynthesis Congress (Montréal, Canada); the first recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Rebeiz Foundation for Basic Biology, 2006; Recipient of the Communication Award of the International Society of Photosynthesis Research, 2007; and the Liberal Arts and Sciences Lifetime Achievement Award of the UIUC, 2008. Further, Govindjee was honored (1) in 2007, through 2 special volumes of *Photosynthesis Research*, celebrating his 75th

birthday and for his 50-year dedicated research in ‘Photosynthesis’ (Guest Editor: Julian Eaton-Rye); (2) in 2008, through a special International Symposium on ‘Photosynthesis in a Global Perspective’, held in November, 2008, at the University of Indore, India; and (3) Volume 34 of this Series “*Photosynthesis – Plastid Biology, Energy Conversion and Carbon Assimilation*”, edited by Julian Eaton-Rye, Baishnab C. Tripathy, and one of us (TDS), was dedicated to Govindjee, celebrating his academic career. Currently, a special issue of *Photosynthesis Research* is being edited by Suleyman Allakhverdiev, Gerald Edwards and Jian-Ren Shen, celebrating his 80th birthday. Govindjee is coauthor of *Photosynthesis* (John Wiley, 1969); and editor of many books, published by several publishers including Academic Press and Kluwer Academic Publishers (now Springer).

Since 2007, each year a Govindjee and Rajni Govindjee Award (<http://www.life.illinois.edu/plantbio/PIBiogiving.html>; http://sib.illinois.edu/grants_Govindjee.htm) is being given to graduate students, by the UIUC, to recognize Excellence in Biological Sciences. For further information on Govindjee, see his website at <http://www.life.illinois.edu/govindjee>.



Thomas D. (Tom) Sharkey obtained his Bachelor's degree in Biology in 1974 from Lyman Briggs College, a residential science college at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. After 2 years as a research technician, Tom entered a Ph.D. program in the Department of Energy Plant Research Laboratory at Michigan State University under the mentorship of Klaus Raschke and finished in 1979. Post-doctoral research was carried out with Graham Farquhar at the Australian National University, in Canberra, where he co-authored a landmark review on photosynthesis and stomatal conductance. For 5 years he worked at the Desert Research Institute, Reno, Nevada. After Reno, Tom spent 20 years as Professor of Botany at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 2008, Tom became Professor and Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Michigan State University. Tom's research interests center on the exchange of gases between plants and the atmosphere. The biochemistry and biophysics underlying carbon dioxide uptake and isoprene emission from plants form the

two major research topics in his laboratory. Among his contributions are measurement of the carbon dioxide concentration inside leaves, an exhaustive study of short-term feedback effects in carbon metabolism, and a significant contribution to elucidation of the pathway by which leaf starch breaks down at night. In the isoprene research field, Tom is recognized as the leading advocate for thermotolerance of photosynthesis as the explanation for why plants emit isoprene. In addition, his laboratory has cloned many of the genes that underlie isoprene synthesis and published many papers on the biochemical regulation of isoprene synthesis. Tom has co-edited three books, the first on trace gas emissions from plants in 1991 (with Elizabeth Holland and Hal Mooney) and then volume 9 of this series (with Richard Leegood and Susanne von Caemmerer) on the physiology of carbon metabolism of photosynthesis in 2000 and volume 34 (with Julian Eaton-Rye and Baishnab C. Tripathy) entitled *Photosynthesis: Plastid Biology, Energy Conversion and Carbon Assimilation*. Tom has been co-series editor of this series since volume 31.

Contents

From the Series Editors	v
Series Editors	xi
Preface	xxi
The Editors	xxiii
Contributors	xxv
Author Index	xxvii
1 What Can We Learn From Bryophyte Photosynthesis?	1–8
<i>David T. Hanson and Steven K. Rice</i>	
Summary	1
I. Introduction	2
II. Terrestrialization	2
III. Biochemical and Cellular Biology	4
IV. Organization of the Bryophyte Photosynthetic System	6
V. Ecophysiology of Bryophyte Photosynthesis: Adapting to Environmental Stress	7
VI. Conclusion	7
2 Early Terrestrialization: Transition from Algal to Bryophyte Grade	9–28
<i>Linda Graham, Louise A. Lewis, Wilson Taylor, Charles Wellman, and Martha Cook</i>	
Summary	10
I. Introduction	11
II. Molecular Systematics Provides a Reasonably Well-Resolved Framework for Investigations of Terrestrialization Process and Pattern	12
III. Early-Evolved Physiological Traits Likely Fostered the Process by Which Streptophytes Made the Transition to Land	13
IV. Comparison of Early-Diverging Modern Photosynthesizers to Precambrian-Devonian Fossils Illuminates the Pattern of Terrestrialization	17
V. Perspective	23
References	23

3	Photosynthesis in Early Land Plants: Adapting to the Terrestrial Environment	29–58
	<i>John A. Raven and Dianne Edwards</i>	
	Summary	29
	I. Introduction	30
	II. Extant Terrestrial Cyanobacteria, Algae and Embryophytes	30
	III. The Time of Origin of Photosynthetic Taxa with Emphasis on Those Which Occur on Land	34
	IV. Evidence of Primary Productivity on Land Before and Contemporary with the First Evidence of Embryophytes	37
	V. Terrestrial Photosynthetic Organisms in the Upper Silurian and Devonian	39
	VI. Photosynthetic Capacities	45
	VII. Conclusion	50
	References	50
4	The Diversification of Bryophytes and Vascular Plants in Evolving Terrestrial Environments	59–78
	<i>Michael C. F. Proctor</i>	
	Summary	59
	I. Introduction	60
	II. Beginnings: The Transition from Water to Land	60
	III. Exchanges of Matter and Energy at the Earth's Surface	61
	IV. Selection Pressures on Early Land Plants	63
	V. The Evolution of Vascular Plants	63
	VI. The Post-palaeozoic Scene: Complex Habitats	69
	VII. Overview	73
	References	74
5	Best Practices for Measuring Photosynthesis at Multiple Scales	79–94
	<i>Steven K. Rice and J. Hans C. Cornelissen</i>	
	Summary	79
	I. Introduction	80
	II. The Photosynthetic Organ in Bryophytes	80
	III. Standardizing Photosynthetic Measurements	85
	IV. Best Practices for Studies of Photosynthesis	89
	References	90

6	Diffusion Limitation and CO₂ Concentrating Mechanisms in Bryophytes	95–112
	<i>David T. Hanson, Karen Renzaglia, and Juan Carlos Villarreal</i>	
	Summary	95
	I. Introduction	96
	II. Tissue Structure and CO ₂ Diffusion	97
	III. Evolutionary Trade-off Between Cell Wall Structure and CO ₂ Diffusion	100
	IV. The Carbon Concentrating Mechanism (CCM) of Bryophytes	101
	References	108
7	Sunsafe Bryophytes: Photoprotection from Excess and Damaging Solar Radiation	113–130
	<i>Sharon A. Robinson and Melinda J. Waterman</i>	
	Summary	113
	I. Introduction	114
	II. Avoiding Absorption of Excessive or Damaging Radiation	115
	III. Dealing with Excess Light Absorbed Within the Chloroplast	123
	IV. Conclusions	126
	References	126
8	Chloroplast Movement in Higher Plants, Ferns and Bryophytes: A Comparative Point of View	131–150
	<i>Martina Königer</i>	
	Summary	131
	I. Introduction	132
	II. Photoreceptors	132
	III. The Role of the Cytoskeleton	135
	IV. Chloroplast Movement Speed	139
	V. Degrees of Movement	141
	VI. Effects of Other Environmental Factors on Chloroplast Positioning	142
	VII. Chloroplast Movement in Different Cellular Locations	143
	VIII. Ecological Importance	144
	IX. Conclusions	145
	References	145

9	Scaling Light Harvesting from Moss “Leaves” to Canopies	151–172
	<i>Ülo Niinemets and Mari Tobias</i>	
	Summary	151
	I. Introduction	152
	II. Light Interception in Mosses	153
	III. Gradients of “Leaf” Traits in Moss Canopies: Acclimation or Senescence?	163
	IV. Conclusions	167
	References	167
10	Structural and Functional Analyses of Bryophyte Canopies	173–186
	<i>Steven K. Rice, David T. Hanson, and Zach Portman</i>	
	Summary	173
	I. Introduction	174
	II. Chlorophyll Fluorescence 2D Imaging in <i>Sphagnum</i>	175
	III. 3D Thermal Mapping of Bryophyte Canopies	178
	IV. Light Dynamics in Virtual <i>Bazzania trilobata</i> Canopies	180
	V. Conclusions	183
	References	184
11	Genetics and Genomics of Moss Models: Physiology Enters the Twenty-first Century	187–200
	<i>David J. Cove and Andrew C. Cuming</i>	
	Summary	187
	I. Introduction	188
	II. Propagation	188
	III. Genetic Manipulation	189
	IV. Genomic Data and Applications	193
	V. Potential for Photosynthetic Studies	196
	References	197
12	Photosynthesis in Aquatic Bryophytes	201–232
	<i>Janice M. Glime</i>	
	Summary	201
	I. Introduction: History of Photosynthesis in Aquatic Bryophytes	202
	II. The Role of Plant and Habitat Structure in Photosynthesis	202
	III. Resource Availability and Utilization in Aquatic Bryophytes	206
	IV. Desiccation	220
	V. Storage Compounds	221
	VI. Productivity	222
	VII. Seasons	223
	VIII. Future Research	224
	References	224

13	Physiological Ecology of Peatland Bryophytes	233–252
	<i>Tomáš Hájek</i>	
	Summary	233
	I. Introduction	234
	II. Specific Adaptations of Peatland Bryophytes	234
	III. Specific Properties of Peatlands	241
	IV. Seasonal Variability of Photosynthesis and Respiration	245
	V. Photosynthesis and Production in a Warmer and Richer World	246
	VI. Suggestions for Further Research	248
	References	248
14	Interacting Controls on Ecosystem Photosynthesis and Respiration in Contrasting Peatland Ecosystems	253–268
	<i>Lawrence B. Flanagan</i>	
	Summary	253
	I. Introduction	254
	II. Characteristics of Study Sites and Ecosystem CO ₂ Flux Measurements	254
	III. Comparison of a <i>Sphagnum</i> -Dominated Poor Fen and a <i>Carex</i> -Dominated Rich Fen	256
	IV. Sensitivity of CO ₂ Exchange in a Moderately-Rich Fen to Warmer and Drier Conditions	259
	V. Peatland Succession and Implications for Historical and Future Carbon Sequestration	262
	VI. Conclusions	264
	References	265
15	Physiological Ecology of Tropical Bryophytes	269–290
	<i>Sebastian Wagner, Maaïke Y. Bader, and Gerhard Zotz</i>	
	Summary	269
	I. Introduction	270
	II. The Physical Setting	271
	III. The Carbon Balance of Tropical Bryophytes	274
	IV. Effects of Hydration and Desiccation on Carbon Balance	276
	V. Effects of Light and CO ₂ on Carbon Balance	281
	VI. Effects of Temperature on Carbon Balance	281
	VII. Nutrients	283
	VIII. The Fate of Non-vascular Epiphytes under Global Change	284
	IX. Conclusions	285
	References	285

16	Physiological Ecology of Dryland Biocrust Mosses	291–308
	<i>Kirsten K. Coe, Jed P. Sparks, and Jayne Belnap</i>	
	Summary	291
	I. Introduction	292
	II. Desiccation Tolerance, Precipitation Pulses, and Carbon Balance	293
	III. Water Relations	295
	IV. Temperature Relations	297
	V. Response to Variation in Light	299
	VI. Response to Elevated CO ₂	300
	VII. Nutrient Relations	302
	VIII. Distributions and Ecological Roles of Biocrust Moss in a Future Climate	303
	IX. Conclusions	304
	References	305
17	Dominating the Antarctic Environment: Bryophytes in a Time of Change	309–324
	<i>Jessica Bramley-Alves, Diana H. King, Sharon A. Robinson, and Rebecca E. Miller</i>	
	Summary	309
	I. Introduction	310
	II. Water Availability	312
	III. Temperature	315
	IV. The Ozone Hole and Increased Ultraviolet Radiation	318
	V. Conclusions	320
	References	320
18	Opportunities in Bryophyte Photosynthesis Research	325–332
	<i>Steven K. Rice and David T. Hanson</i>	
	Summary	325
	I. Introduction	326
	II. Opportunities in Bryophyte Photosynthesis Research	326
	III. Bryophyte Biology and Related Resources	329
	IV. Conclusions	330
	References	330
	Subject Index	333–342

Preface

Why would anyone let you study moss? This question was put to one of us (David Hanson) by a well-known and well-respected plant biologist (who will not be named) in the middle of the 1990s when he was graduate student. This was not a question originating from malice, but rather benign ignorance and a genuine concern for the career of an aspiring biologist. It is also likely that many authors in this volume have had similar questions put to them since bryophyte photosynthesis, and even bryophyte biology in general, has suffered from a perceived lack of relevance or importance until recent decades. Much of the bryophyte dismissal came from out-dated views that bryophytes were just reduced vascular plants, an evolutionary dead-end with remnants that were essentially inconsequential ecologically except for the genus *Sphagnum*. Fortunately, these views have been turned on their head.

Bryophytes are now widely recognized as the earliest divergent land plants from phylogenetic evidence and ever-growing fossil data. This has cemented their important position in understanding the evolution of land plants. Ecologically, *Sphagnum* is still king and is probably the most important single genus of all land plants, playing a major, if not controlling, role in ecosystem function over 2–3 % of the continental surface. However, critical roles of other bryophytes as members of vast biological crust communities and as major components of high latitude and altitude ecosystems is undeniable, and their roles in many other ecosystems are more likely to be poorly understood rather than not being important. The value of bryophytes for understanding cellular and developmental biology of plants has also become much clearer and has helped immensely in the effort to garner respect for these misunderstood organisms. After centuries of relative neglect, it appears that the era of bryophyte biology is well underway.

This volume of *Advances in Photosynthesis and Respiration Including Bioenergy and Related Processes* brings together experts on bryophyte photosynthesis whose research spans the genome and cell, through whole plant and ecosystem function, and combines that with historical perspectives on the role of algal, bryophyte and vascular plant ancestors during the terrestrialization of the Earth. Many of the authors in this volume are responsible for ushering in a new era for bryophyte biology, while others are emerging as leaders for the future. There are also others in the field from both of these categories that we were not able to include in this volume, and we see that as evidence of a strong and growing field. Here we have tried to take a wide view on existing areas of research involving photosynthesis in bryophytes and early land plants (actual interpretations from fossil data, not just examination of modern representatives).

We begin this volume with an introductory chapter, followed by three multi-chapter sections, and we end the book with a final prospective chapter. The introduction (Chap. 1) provides an overview of why research in bryophyte photosynthesis is important; it is also a general guide to where each topic is addressed in the book. We hope that this will help newcomers to the field navigate to the material that is of greatest interest to them. In the first section of this volume, after the introduction, authors consider fossil, biogeochemical, systematic and comparative physiological evidence to understand three phases of terrestrialization: the transition to the land from aquatic algal ancestors (Chap. 2); the physiological adaptation of early land plants (Chap. 3); and the diversification of plants and environments (Chap. 4). The second section starts out with a discussion of the challenges involved in measuring photosynthesis of bryophytes and presents our view of what the best practices should entail (Chap. 5).

The section then introduces new perspectives and reviews photosynthetic physiology across spatial and temporal scales in six additional chapters that focus on the unique strategies of bryophytes in relation to carbon acquisition (Chap. 6), photoprotection (Chap. 7), chloroplast movement (Chap. 8), canopy structure (Chaps. 9 and 10) along with genetics and genomics of bryophytes (Chap. 11). This section also discusses novel approaches used in the investigation of bryophyte photosynthesis. The last section emphasizes the ecological setting, showing how the photosynthetic physiology of bryophytes plays out within aquatic (Chap. 12), peatland (Chaps. 13 and 14), tropical (Chap. 15), dryland (Chap. 16) and Antarctic (Chap. 17) settings with discussions of implications of global change. The volume ends with a forward-looking view (Chap. 18) of exciting opportunities for future work along with a list of some other books and websites that are valuable resources for researchers interested in bryophyte photosynthesis. Overall, the 18 well-illustrated chapters reveal unique physiological approaches to achieving carbon balance and dealing with environmental limitations and stresses that present an alternative, yet successful strategy for land plants.

We are grateful for the effort and patience of the authors and series editors in helping to bring this volume to fruition. The authors of this volume helped lay the foundations for

this field of work and inspired both of us during our higher education and subsequent careers. We hesitate to single out specific authors in such a distinguished list, but we hope others will agree with us and take a moment to recognize and reflect upon the massive contributions of Michael Proctor and John Raven (to date!). We are especially grateful for their contributions to the field and to this volume. In addition, Govindjee and Tom Sharkey have long recognized the value of studying bryophyte photosynthesis and the value of their encouragement and advice is immeasurable. It has been a great pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group. We hope readers will be as invigorated as we are by this volume and will be inspired to participate in the advancement of research in bryophyte photosynthesis and respiration. Just remember, bryophytes rule! If you were unaware of this fact before reading this volume, we hope you are persuaded by the time you finish it.

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The Editors



David T. Hanson was born on April 25, 1972 in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. He is Associate Professor in the Department of Biology and Associate Curator of Bryophytes in the Museum of Southwestern Biology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He received his Bachelor of Science degree with Honors in Botany from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. It was there that David's passion for bryophytes was ignited under the guidance of Prof. Diana G. Horton. His Honors thesis examined whether species of the genus *Atrichum* had sun and shade leaf forms based on the height of photosynthetic lamellae, and this initiated his life-long interest in both bryophytes and photosynthesis. During the summer of 1994, between undergraduate and graduate school, David was fortunate to take "Bryophytes" with one of the best known bryologists of his time, Prof. Howard Crum, along with "Boreal Flora" taught by the legendary Prof. Ed Voss at the University of Michigan Biological Station, cementing his love of the Northwoods, *Sphagnum* and bathtub Marys. These experiences colored his subsequent Ph.D., received in 1999, from the Botany Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he pursued

research in photosynthesis, isoprene emission, and bryophyte biology under the guidance of Prof. Thomas D. Sharkey (co-editor of this series) and Prof. Linda E. Graham (contributor to this volume). His post-doctoral fellowship at the Australian National University from 2000 to 2002 was a joint appointment to work with Prof. T. John Andrews and Prof. Murray R. Badger on Rubisco kinetics and CO₂ concentrating mechanisms in hornworts and algae. David was appointed as Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico started in 2002 and promoted to Associate Professor in 2008. In the area of bryophyte research, David is best known for his work on the evolution of isoprene emission from mosses and function of the hornwort pyrenoid. However, in 2006 he developed a new method for conducting high-frequency, on-line ¹³CO₂ gas exchange and since then his research has centered on using stable isotopes of CO₂ to study diffusion through photosynthetic tissues. This has led to several papers demonstrating an *in vivo* role for CO₂ transporting aquaporins. David is currently the Chair of the 2014 Gordon Conference on CO₂ Assimilation in Plants: Genome to Biome along with Prof. Christoph Peterhansel.



Steven K. Rice was born on April 12, 1961 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, and is currently Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and co-Program Director of the Bioengineering Program at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Yale University in 1983 and spent 5 years teaching science in museum and school settings. Following his deepening interests in plant biology, Steven returned to school at Duke University to earn his Master's of Science (1991) and Ph.D. (1994) degrees in Botany. At Duke, his interest in bryophyte structure-function relationships was stimulated by Brent Mishler, who co-advised his dissertation (with ecologist Norman Christensen) on "Form, Function and Phylogeny of Aquatic *Sphagnum*", and by Lewis Anderson, who led him on many collecting trips to the Coastal Plain, teaching Steven the idiosyncrasies of

Sphagnum biology in that region. Following a post-doctoral position at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with the ecologist Robert Peet, and a teaching position at Wake Forest University, Steven came to Union College in 1998 as an Assistant Professor. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 2004 and to Professor in 2011. In his research he employs integrative and comparative approaches to understand the ecological and evolutionary significance of variation in plant form in bryophytes. His studies focus on understanding structure-function relationships with particular emphasis on how variation in structure influences water balance, carbon balance and plant productivity. With co-authors (N. Neal, J. Mango and K. Black), he received the 2012 Sullivant Award from the American Bryological and Lichenological Society for the best bryology publication in *The Bryologist*.

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Author Index

- Abramoff, M.D., 178
- Bader, M.Y., 269–285
Baker, N.R., 175
Belnap, J., 291–304
Bramley-Alves, J.E., 309–320
- Chaerle, L., 175, 184
Coe, K.K., 291–304
Cook, M., 9–23
Cornelissen, J.H.C., 79–90
Cove, D.J., 187–197
Cuming, A.C., 187–197
- Edwards, D., 29–50
- Flanagan, L.B., 253–265
- Glime, J.M., 201–224
Graham, L., 9–23
- Hájek, T., 233–248
Hanson, D.T., 1–8, 95–108,
173–184, 325–330
- King, D.H., 309–320
Königer, M., 131–145
- Lewis, L.A., 9–23
- Miller, R.E., 309–320
- Niinemets, Ü., 151–167
- Portman, Z., 173–184
Proctor, M.C.F., 59–74
- Raven, J.A., 29–50
Renzaglia, K., 95–108
Rice, S.K., 1–8, 79–90, 173–184, 325–330
Robinson, S.A., 113–126, 309–320
- Sparks, J.P., 291–304
- Taylor, W., 9–23
Tobias, M., 151–167
- Villarreal, J.C., 95–108
von Wettstein, F., 188, 190
- Wagner, S., 269–285
Waterman, M.J., 113–126
Wellman, C., 9–23
- Zotz, G., 269–285

Chapter 1

What Can We Learn From Bryophyte Photosynthesis?

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Summary	1
I. Introduction.....	2
II. Terrestrialization	2
A. Photosynthesis on Land.....	2
B. Tiny but Tenacious.....	3
C. Making Inferences from Extant Organisms	3
III. Biochemical and Cellular Biology	4
A. Are Bryophytes C ₃ ?	4
B. The Terrestrial Pyrenoid: Unique Among Plants	5
C. Drying Without Dying	5
D. Tolerating Light.....	5
E. Bryophyte Genomics.....	6
IV. Organization of the Bryophyte Photosynthetic System.....	6
V. Ecophysiology of Bryophyte Photosynthesis: Adapting to Environmental Stress	7
VI. Conclusion.....	7
Acknowledgements.....	8

Summary

Bryophytes have been evolving in terrestrial and aquatic environments longer than any other group of land plants, surviving and thriving through an incredible range of climatic and environmental variation. Several of the bryophyte growth forms we find today closely resemble those found in ancient fossils whereas many of the other early land plant forms lack modern representatives. What is it about bryophyte growth form and physiology that has allowed them to persist through time and radiate into every terrestrial ecosystem, even dominating some of them? What can we learn from modern bryophytes to address this question and to predict how plants will respond to future environmental change? In this chapter, we briefly examine these questions as a preview to the volume as a whole.

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I. Introduction

Bryophytes have barely been tapped as a resource for understanding photosynthesis and respiration on land despite the fact that the bryophyte life form has achieved ecological success in varied environments that span every continent, occur across dramatic gradients of temperature and water availability and were present at the early stages of the transition from aquatic habitats to land, potentially as early as the Cambrian (see Chaps. 2 and 3). Critical aspects of life cycle evolution were involved in adapting bryophyte ancestors to life on land (e.g., protection of the embryo in protective maternal tissue, elaboration of two distinct multicellular stages specialized for different functions), but the colonization of land also required structural and physiological adaptations to succeed in habitats with high solar radiation, a drying atmosphere, high temperature fluctuations, and limited access to dissolved nutrients (Chaps. 4 and 7).

Although the primary architecture of the photosynthetic machinery was conserved from their algal ancestors, early land plants, as with contemporary bryophytes, likely facilitated carbon capture over short and long temporal scales in several ways. These include the reduction of external water films on leaf surfaces, which impede diffusion of carbon dioxide, the evolution of ventilated thalli or leaf structures, and the evolution of carbon concentrating mechanisms. In addition, they evolved desiccation tolerance, which allowed plants to equilibrate with a drying atmosphere and retain metabolic function upon rehydration along with adaptations to achieve positive carbon balance during wet—dry cycles. Bryophyte population and community structure also indirectly influences photosynthesis through alteration of canopy boundary layers and, thereby, retention of water and soil respired CO₂. The multiple

scales over which bryophyte photosynthesis is measured (shoot, canopy, community) also raises the question of what is a functional photosynthetic unit in bryophytes, i.e. what can be treated as an analogue to the vascular plant leaf (Chaps. 5 and 9)? The amazing variation in form and function and the diverse range of micro-habitats that bryophytes occupy makes them an ideal, yet rarely utilized, system for studying the role of photosynthesis and respiration in the adaptive radiation of plants.

II. Terrestrialization

Terrestrialization is the adaptive radiation of aquatic organisms onto land. The organisms we consider here are grouped by function rather than by phylogeny. Interestingly, despite the existence of all major lineages of aquatic photosynthetic organisms, from cyanobacteria to green algae, being present when terrestrial photosynthetic organisms were becoming wide-spread, only one small corner of that aquatic diversity came to dominate land. For roughly the last 500 million years, descendants of Charophycean green algae, collectively called embryophytes, or land plants, have adaptively radiated onto land with greater success than any other lineage. Thus, the story of terrestrialization by photosynthetic organisms has been effectively limited to a single lineage. Bryophytes are at the base of this lineage, and in this volume we examine what features of bryophyte photosynthesis may have allowed them to be so successful.

A. Photosynthesis on Land

Despite their current dominance of terrestrial environments, land plants (embryophytes) are one of several groups of photosynthetic organisms that have terrestrial representatives. It is likely that cyanobacteria, many varieties of algae, and even lichens colonized land before or concurrently with land plants and each of these groups have extant terrestrial representatives

Abbreviation: Rubisco – ribulose-1,5-bisphosphate carboxylase/oxygenase