

Bryological Observation on Surtsey

by

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The biological students stationed on the island for the summer reported in early August finding a mat of moss plants growing on the island.

I, therefore, visited the island in August 17th, 1967, and investigated the location, which was on the northern and north-western border of the Mew-lagoon, on a sand bank at the edge of the water. There were several patches in a row on the edge of the bank. All the moss plants were at a young state of growth with no indication of sex organs. They were all of the same species, Funaria hygrometrica Hedw.

On the 12th of September a second location of moss growth was discovered on the island. In this case the botanist, Eythor Einarsson, discovered patches of moss at the edge of a lava crater in the central part of the island. I identified samples of these as being of two species, the previously found Funaria hygrometrica Hedw. and a second species Bryum argenteum Hedw. These are the first two species of bryophytes known to start growth on the new volcanic island.