

# Circular-leaved Peat Moss

*Sphagnum cyclophyllum*

## STATUS

Endangered 

Not listed



135

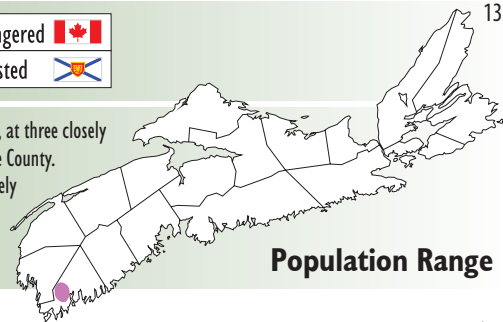


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## Species Description

Circular-leaved Peat Moss is a distinctive, bushy *Sphagnum* moss. It has large (2-3 mm), soft, nearly circular stem leaves and varies from green, to orangish-yellow to dark red. Its stems are brown to black. It often has few or no short lateral branches and lacks an organized capitulum (the compact cluster of young branches at the tip of the stem).

Occurs only in Nova Scotia, at three closely clustered sites in Shelburne County. These sites are approximately 700 km from the nearest known populations in New Jersey, U.S.



## Population Range

## Habitat

Circular-leaved Peat Moss typically occurs in wet, acidic habitats such as seasonally flooded depressions within shrub bogs, which often dry out in the summer. In Nova Scotia, it may be found in natural depressions, or in artificial features such as ditches. While it is most often found on sandy soils, it can also occur on calcareous substrates (substrates composed of limy rocks, such as limestone).



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Depression in bog



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Flooded depression

Look for this moss in seasonally flooded bogs, particularly in low-lying wet depressions.



## Interesting Points

- In Canada, it is known from only three sites in Nova Scotia.
- The Canadian population is separated from any U.S. populations by several hundred kilometers.
- Specimens are housed at the E.C. Smith Herbarium at Acadia University.
- In the U.S., it is considered a species of the Atlantic Coastal Plain.
- It benefits from occasional fires that clear competing vegetation, but changes to natural fire regimes pose a threat.

## Similar Species

### Simple Peatmoss (*Sphagnum pylaesii*):

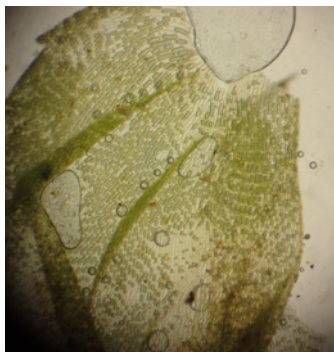
Small, slender, yellow-green to brownish-black, may be unbranched or shortly branched. Often found in similar habitats, including seepage zones and wet ledges.



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Under microscope

## Threats to Survival

- Drought conditions associated with climate change.
- Changes to natural fire regimes (increased frequency, intensity, and timing of fires).
- Limited dispersal ability (sexual reproduction is rare, and dispersal over long distances is limited by its mode of asexual reproduction).

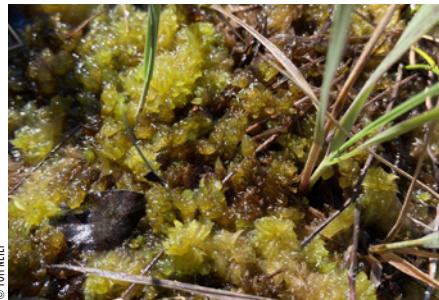


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Forest fire in Shelburne County

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report any sightings. Support climate initiatives and wetland protection in Nova Scotia. Take proper precautions to prevent forest fires, follow local burn restrictions, and avoid unnecessary burning.



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## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship

**Contact:** NS DNRR: [biodiversity@novascotia.ca](mailto:biodiversity@novascotia.ca)

**Info:** [sararegistry.gc.ca](http://sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447

**Stewardship:** Burn restrictions: [www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe](http://www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe)