

Take a closer look at... MOSS

Mosses are remarkable. They are the oldest land plants on Earth, and have been around for 400 million years or more - well before dinosaurs existed! They act as a home for many tiny creatures, and are often first to appear on bare soil and rock, providing a moist foothold for many other plants. Mosses produce microscopic spores instead of seeds.

Look closely and you may see the tiny capsules which hold the spores. Sensitive to pollution, mosses can help us monitor the state of our environment.

- Some mosses can survive for weeks without water and then soak it up like a sponge when it rains - sphagnum moss can absorb up to 25 times its own weight!
- Some garden composts are made from the dead remains of sphagnum mosses formed over thousands of years in peat bogs. Peat bogs are disappearing - we can help by using peat-free compost.
- Soft and absorbent - mosses have been traditionally used as bedding, padding and packing materials.
- Mosses do not have roots - they attach themselves to surfaces by delicate brown threads called rhizoids.
- Sphagnum moss has mild antiseptic properties and was used in World War I for wound dressings.



Moss capsules



Sphagnum moss



Visit the **Wales Biodiversity Partnership** for more on mosses in Wales and the **Council's website** for more on **Carmarthenshire's amazing wildlife**.



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