CALICIOD LICHENS:
ECOLOGY, DISTRIBUTION, AND IDENTIFICATION

Instructors: Steven Selva
Dates: June 9th – 15th, 2024

As perhaps our most sensitive biomonitors of forest ecosystem health, the calicioid lichens and fungi are a natural unit of investigation. Distinguished by their tiny (1-2 mm tall) stipitate apothecia, the taxa in this group can be found growing in more forest microhabitats than any other group of species. As the diversity of microhabitats increases over time in an aging forest, so too does the diversity of calicioid species that colonize them. As a result, the presence or absence of calicioid lichens and fungi can provide evidence as to whether a forest that looks old really is old and has been little disturbed over a long period of time. Other forms of lichens also tend to only occur in old forests. Over the past 35 years, the calicioids and other old forest lichens have been used to assess the continuity of forest ecosystems in northern New England and Maritime Canada. Students in this course will become familiar with this method of assessment by learning to locate these species in the field, learning how to collect and process them for subsequent investigation, and learning how to identify them using available keys.

GENERAL INFO   CALENDAR   APPLY

about the instructor

Dr. Steven Selva (sselva@maine.edu) is Professor Emeritus of Biology and Environmental Studies at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, where he has been since 1976. Since the summer of 1986, Dr. Selva has been engaged in an ongoing research project in which lichens are being used to assess the continuity of forest ecosystems in the Acadian Forest of northeastern North America. He has written numerous articles on the subject, including several on the calicioid lichens and fungi and their role as old-growth forest indicator species.