



Liverworts and Liverwort Ecology

June 14–20, 2026

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In this seminar, we will focus on discovery and identification of liverworts in major Maine habitats. Participants will learn to find liverworts in the field, and to identify liverwort genera using available literature and microscopy. Liverworts are moss-like plants, exhibiting a substantial variation in shapes, sizes, and colors. Lectures in this course will cover morphology and diversity, ecology, biogeography, the liverwort tree of life, and an overview of internet resources related to their distribution and identification. Species collected during the seminar will be discussed within the context of bryophyte diversity of Northeastern North America. Daily field trips will target liverworts on diverse substrates in conifer and hardwood forests, peatlands, and disturbed man-made habitats. In the laboratory we will focus on understanding morphological terms in keys through hands-on examination of plants using both dissecting and compound microscopes. We will identify plants that we collect using provided keys and other resources. Participants are encouraged to bring challenging specimens with them.

Blanka Agüero (blanka@duke.edu) is a Collections Manager in the Duke University Herbarium. She received her Ph.D. in bryophyte systematics from Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. She has studied bryophytes in Europe, North America, and around the world. She is a co-author, with Jon Shaw and Lewis Anderson, of a peat moss revision for the southeastern United States, published in 2009. She has substantial experience photographing mosses and liverworts in the field. She has participated in a multi-institutional project aimed at reconstructing the liverwort tree of life, and she's actively involved in the Consortium of Bryophyte Herbaria ("bryophyte portal").