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Class 11th

Sub. Biology

Date:- 26.11.20

Life Cycle

Bryophytes have heteromorphic or heterologous alternation of generation. The gametophyte may be produced directly or first from a juvenile stage called protonema.

Economic Importance

Bryophytes in general are of little economic importance. But, several species have some uses.

- (i) Some mosses provide food for herbaceous mammals, birds and other animals.
- (ii) Species of Sphagnum (a moss), provides peat that have long been used as fuel. It has the capacity to hold water as packing material for transshipment of living material.
- (iii) Mosses along with lichens are the first organisms to colonise rocks. Hence, these help in biological succession. They decompose rocks making the substrate suitable for the growth of higher plants.
- (iv) Mosses from dense mats on the soil, they reduce the impact of falling rain and prevent soil erosion.
- (v) Marchantia has medicinal properties to cure lungs and liver infections. It also has antitumour properties.

Bryophytes do not attain great heights. They may range of 0.4 to 70 cm and have thalloid body.

The reasons may be following

(i) Root is absent.

(ii) Vascular tissues are not present.

- (iii) Cuticle is not present on the plant body.
- (iv) Absence of mechanical tissue.
- (v) Male gametes need to swim upto the interior of dehisced archegonia.