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B.Sc. PART I (H) PAPER II

CORE CONCEPT OF BRYOPHYTES

Economic Importance of Sphagnum: As far as the direct economic importance of the bryophytes is concerned, the Sphagnum (peat mosses) are the only bryophytes ~~is concerned~~ which are by far the most important. On account of its remarkable power to absorb and hold water like a sponge, Sphagnum is extensively used in seed beds and greenhouses to root cuttings to hold moisture in dry soil to pack bulbs, cuttings and seedlings for shipment to maintain high soil acidity required by certain plants and even to ship clams and other aquatic animals which otherwise die in the absence of water. Sphagnum is also used as a stable litter and bedding. In addition to its superior absorptive power Sphagnum has another useful property that it is slightly antiseptic. On account of these

two properties it was used in place of cotton in the Russo-Japanese war and the world war I, for filling absorbent bandages in surgical dressing in hospitals. The peat is used for fuel in Ireland, Scotland and northern Europe and is a potential source of coal. In colder regions where peat reaches its greatest development, the lower layers of peat become carbonized, and after the lapse of ages is available to man in the shape of coal.

