BUXBAUMIA MINAKATAE Okam.
Ethereal Elf Cap Moss

FAMILY: Buxbaumiaceae

SYNONYMS: Buxbaumia subcylindrica Grout.

HABIT: These apparently ephemeral plants can be recognized in the field only by the presence of sporophytes which range up to 10 mm in length. The lance-cylindric, somewhat inclined capsules are perched on top of an erect seta, the overall appearance vaguely resembling a miniature portable hair dryer.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This species is similar to its rare counterpart Buxbaumia aphylla, the bug-on-a-stick moss. The two species, however, occupy quite different habitats and the capsule on B. aphylla is broadly ovoid and flattened on top, resembling an Aladdin’s lamp, whereas the capsule of B. minakatae is cylindrical and tube-shaped.

TOTAL RANGE: Nfld, N.S., VT, MS, MI, NY, VA, NC, OH; Japan, Siberia.

STATE RANGE: This rare species is known from one post-1980 collection from Champaign County.

HABITAT: Typically occurs in swampy habitats where it grows on old, moist, soft decorticated logs and stumps.

HAZARDS: Drying or drainage of the habitat; removal of shade; development of trails.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but predictably poor.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect 2-3 single plants (sporophytes) only after spores have been released.

COMMENTS: This species is great rarity and is represented by only a few collections in North America. The sporophytes appear to last from only a few weeks to a month. In Ohio this would be from mid-August through late-October.

SELECTED REFERENCES:
