

Summary Dr. Robert Egan, Lichens

The origins of Dr. Egan's research on Lichens in the Big Thicket dates to 1975-79 when serving as a faculty member in the Biology Department at Texas A&M. With funding from the National Park Service, he began collecting and documenting lichens in the Big Thicket National Preserve (BTNP) and adjacent areas. In early 1981 Dr. Egan partnered with Dr. Virginia Gordy of Houston to conduct a baseline lichen survey with reference to air pollution applications. In 2006 with financial help from the Big Thicket Association, Dr. Egan returned to the area and served as the Lichen Taxonomic Working Inventory Group leader for the Thicket of Diversity All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory.

His grant *Lichens of the Big Thicket National Preserve* was approved for \$6,070 and used Centennial Challenge funds.

With the assistance of graduate students, field collections were conducted in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011. From the Big Thicket National Preserve and adjacent areas Dr. Egan has documented 1089 lichen specimen records representing 137 species in 65 genera. Lichen species catalogued from official units in the BTNP currently total 869 specimens representing 123 species in 59 genera. To date, two species, *Bulbothrix isidiza* and *Pseudoparmelia uleana*, are first reports for the state of Texas.

Dr. Egan has conducted workshops in Saratoga at the BTNP Field Research Station in 2008 and 2010. A poster was created and presented at the annual meeting of the American Bryological and Lichenological Society in Snowbird, Utah in July 2009.

Dr. Egan assisted Dr. Rick Hammer's class from Abilene's Hardin Simmons University with lichen presentations, field work and identification in the lab. The group visited the BTNP in May 2011 and utilized Saratoga's Field Research Station's dorms, classroom and laboratory.

Dr. Egan currently works at **University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

The Cynthia Troxell Collections:

In the fall, 2010 Egan received an email from Daniel Murphy of Boulder, Colorado, informing of the death of his wife, Cynthia Troxell. He had found many boxes of lichen specimens from Louisiana, Texas, Minnesota and Colorado which he knew had been associated with her work in the 1970s for her undergraduate and graduate studies.

Says Egan:

“He asked if I (and Larry St. Clair of Brigham Young University) would be interested in these specimens. We both expressed interest in her collections and arranged over the next couple of months to have the specimens and her notes and collection books sent to us – Minnesota, Louisiana and Texas lichens to me at UNO and the Colorado material to Larry St. Clair at BYU.

Cynthia was an undergraduate student at Louisiana State University working with Dr. Shirley Tucker in the mid 1970s, and I had met her on at least one occasion while working in the BTNP. As I discovered, her undergraduate thesis at LSU concerned lichens from the BTNP area, and the specimens Daniel had sent from Colorado were the collections which formed the basis for her study. The Colorado collections were part of her M.A. work at the University of Colorado-Boulder under Dr. Sam Shushan.

By piecing together specimen packet notes, collection numbers, and data from her field notebooks, I have been able to create new, complete labels for over 400 SE Texas specimens and to prepare the material for identification/verification and deposit into the UNO Lichen Herbarium. My M.S. student Lacey LeGrand is incorporating these collections along with our recent field specimens as part of her current thesis project. Several of these collections appear to be rare early records for SE Texas.”

Submitted by Mary C. Johnston, Nov 13, 2020

In 2026, ToD Chair Mary C. Johnston and Intern, Natalia Doiron, reviewed all records. There were no additions to research or changes in the 2020 report.

However, a more thorough review of the data indicated an additional two species that are now listed in the 2026 Taxa Tally for a total of 139 species of lichens. The 114 species from the earlier Troxell collection are listed as historical.

Submitted by: Mary C. Johnston and Natalia Doiron, April 2026