

*Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian*

## **Sandbags, moss, lichen, butterflies, and garden gossip**



**A different species of moss thrives on the pavement.**



Photos Cynthia Brian

**You have a healthy yard when you have lichen growing on your trees.**

... continued from Page OH1

Lichens benefit humans by absorbing pollutants, including heavy metals, sulfur, and carbon. Scientists can extract these toxins to determine pollution levels.

Hummingbirds and other birds make nests from lichens, using them as camouflage and insulation. Many grazing animals include lichens as a nutritious food source. Some insects have adapted their appearance to be dis-

guised as lichen. If you have lichens growing on your rocks, trees, and soil on your property, you are fortunate. This means that the air you are breathing is clean and healthy. Be careful to not disturb lichen-encrusted soil as it can take years to regenerate. When I was visiting Iceland, we were specifically told not to walk or sit on the lichen-covered earth as it could take hundreds of years to re-grow. Nature is not hurrying with lichen. I am eternally grateful for the bounty of lichens that call my landscape home.