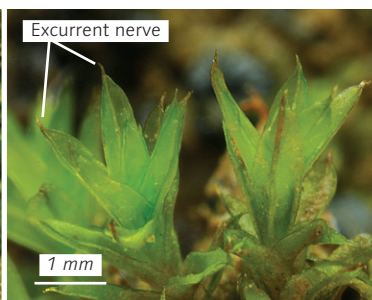
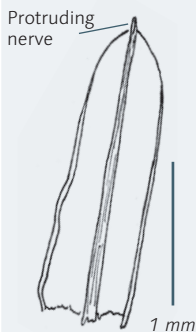
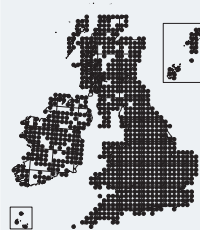


Barbula unguiculata

Bird's-claw Beard-moss

Key 174, 190, 249



Identification

This species grows in distinctive, bright yellow-green turfs up to 1.5 cm tall. The leaves are usually 1.5–2 mm long, and spread away from the stem when moist, but take on a tight spiral twist when dry, making the yellow nerve very conspicuous. Each leaf is parallel-sided for most of its length with a rounded tip from which the nerve protrudes in a short, thick point. The margins are recurved, often for most of the length of the leaf. Capsules are not common, but when present are borne upright on a red seta.

Similar species

B. convoluta (p. 454) tends to be a smaller plant, the leaf tip is more tapered and the nerve ends in the leaf tip or is only very shortly excurrent. The capsules of *B. convoluta* are borne on a yellow seta. *B. unguiculata* may be confused with *Trichostomum brachydontium* (p. 433), but that is a bigger plant with leaves that are nearly twice as long and without recurved margins. *Encalypta streptocarpa* (p. 557) has much longer (4–7 mm) leaves. *Syntrichia amplexa* (Smith, p. 388) lacks a protruding nerve at the leaf tip, and the leaves may become orange-brown.

Habitat

This is a plant of neutral or base-rich, disturbed and open habitats such as the edges of paths, gardens, fields and old walls. It is common throughout Britain and Ireland.