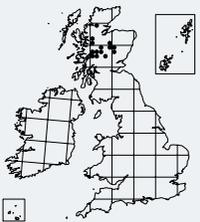
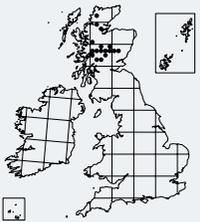
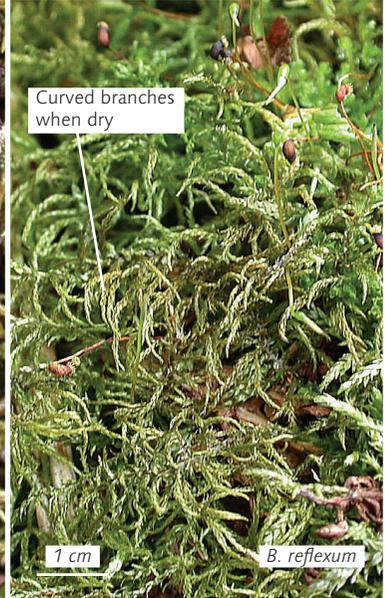


*Brachythecium glaciale/reflexum**Sciuro-hypnum glaciale/S. reflexum*

Snow/Reflexed Feather-moss

*B. glaciale**B. reflexum**B. glaciale**B. reflexum*

## Identification

Both species have slender shoots (2–6 cm long), forming thin, intricate, flat patches of a rather open texture, or mixed with other mosses. The branches are widely spaced and tend to spread widely from the stem, though characteristically curved when dry. The leaves are shrunken and loosely erect or appressed when dry, but spread when moist. Stem leaves are about 1.5 mm long, broadly triangular in the lower half, abruptly narrowed at the base, and end in a long, slender point which appears thread-like when dry. The leaf base runs onto the stem, appearing as wide, conspicuous wings, which are visible with a hand lens when moist. Branch leaves are smaller and more egg-shaped, with a shorter tip. Capsules are not common and have a roughened seta. *B. reflexum* is the smaller of the two, with more or less pinnate shoots, and the nerve extends into the leaf tip. *B. glaciale* has less regular, rather long branches, and its nerve ceases well below the leaf tip.

## Similar species

*B. rivulare* (p. 748) also has a leaf base that runs down conspicuously onto the stem, but is larger, with a shortly pointed leaf tip and does not occur in flat, intricate patches. *B. populeum* (p. 744) has narrow, spearhead-shaped leaves and short, crowded branches. *B. reflexum* resembles *Kindbergia praelonga* (p. 767), but in *K. praelonga* the leaves spread outwards at the tip of the stem, giving the shoot tip a star-like appearance if viewed end on. In its slender size *B. reflexum* also resembles *Amblystegium varium* (p. 703), but *A. varium* does not have a leaf base that broadly runs onto the stem. *B. starkei* (*Sciuro-hypnum starkei*) (Smith, p. 827) is a very rare Scottish mountain species, distinguished mainly by microscopic characters, but the branches are not distinctly curved when dry and are often flattened.

## Habitat

*B. glaciale* and *B. reflexum* are rare and confined to high altitudes in Scotland, among rocks and in block scree, especially under ferns and on fern litter, and in places where snow lies late in the year.

Photos Gordon Rothero Text Tom Blockeel