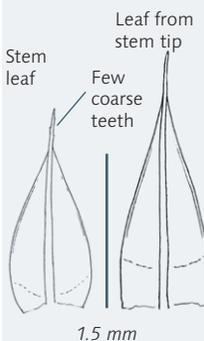
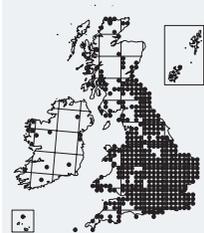


Bryum caespiticium

Tufted Thread-moss



Identification

The shoots of this moss are normally only 0.5–1 cm tall, with dense tufts of leaves at the upper ends. These densely packed upper leaves are longer (about 3 mm) than those lower down the stem (about 1.5 mm long). The leaves are light, silky green, with an excurrent nerve, and alter little when dry, unlike those of *B. capillare* (p. 586), which become twisted like a corkscrew. The seta (up to 3 cm tall) supports usually drooping capsules about 3.5 mm long, which ripen in summer. Although it has previously been considered very common (see map), *B. caespiticium* may have been over-recorded in the past and should not be identified when non-fertile. It has separate male and female plants.

Similar species

B. caespiticium is one of the commoner of around 15 British *Bryum* species which can only be reliably identified when features of mature capsules and the occurrence and arrangement of male and female inflorescences are examined microscopically. Numerous similar, less common species of *Bryum* are not described fully in this guide because they cannot be reliably identified to species in the field (see Smith, pp. 532–589). Many of these are rare, but *B. algovicum* (Smith, p. 556) is fairly frequent and occurs in similar places to *B. caespiticium*. However, these two species cannot be reliably distinguished from each other except by microscopical examination. *B. radiculosum* (p. 597) has been misidentified in the past as *B. caespiticium*, but the latter does not form dense, dark green, shiny tufts on walls. When growing in shade, the rare *B. kunzei* (*B. funkii*, or *B. funkii* in Smith, p. 567) may be indistinguishable from *B. caespiticium*, *B. creberrimum* (Smith, p. 562), and several other members of the genus. See also *B. pallescens* (p. 590).

Habitat

B. caespiticium occurs on rock or shallow soil on bare ground, such as waste places, quarries, soil banks, dune slacks, and on the tops of walls.