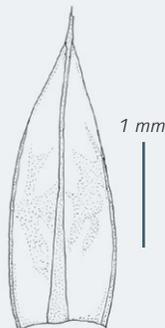
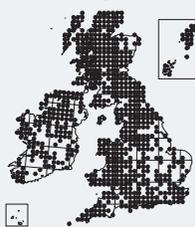


Bryum pallens

Pale Thread-moss

Key 256



Identification

A variable moss, both in habit and hue, *B. pallens* is usually salmon-pink or pale rosy-red, but may be brownish or green. It forms patches, tufts, or grows as scattered shoots, typically 1–2 cm tall, but sometimes taller. The upper leaves are more crowded than those below, concave, 1–3 mm long, with a prominent nerve and border, and a pale base, and do not or at most only slightly run down onto the stem. The nerve is usually excurrent. Filamentous gemmae may occasionally be found in the leaf axils, for example on plants in the uplands. The narrowly pear-shaped capsules are about 3.5 mm long, and ripen in summer and autumn, borne on a seta 2–3 cm long, but are uncommon.

Similar species

B. alpinum (p. 599) has longer leaves which are often a deeper red, unbordered and with leaf-blade cells much narrower and longer than in *B. pallens*.

B. pseudotriquetrum (p. 592) is typically several centimetres tall (although small, young *B. pseudotriquetrum* may look very like *B. pallens*), and has a leaf base that runs down further onto the stem. Well-grown *B. pseudotriquetrum* has a red leaf base.

B. weigeli (p. 581) has leaves more evenly spaced out along the stem, and which run well down onto the stem, with borders less thickened, and a shorter nerve.

The very rare *B. uliginosum* (Smith, p. 543) is a large, greenish moss with long, asymmetrical capsules; as in *B. pallens*, its leaves have a thickened border.



B. warneum (Smith, p. 540) is a rare moss of damp, base-enriched coastal soil, usually in dune slacks. Typical forms of *B. warneum* differ from large, fertile plants of *B. pallens* in having pear-shaped capsules with a small mouth (ripening mainly in late autumn) on a strikingly long seta.

B. arcticum (Smith, p. 541) is a rare, montane species that can only be reliably distinguished from *B. pallens* microscopically (by sexuality, features of the peristome, and size of spores). However, its capsules are often held more or less horizontally rather than well below the horizontal.

The gemmiferous forms of *B. pallens* were formerly distinguished as *B. subelegans* (Smith, p. 533). *B. laevifilum* (p. 587) also has filamentous gemmae in its leaf axils, but is not pink and mainly grows on bark.

Non-fruiting plants of *Funaria hygrometrica* (p. 561), *Entosthodon* species (pp. 562–564), *Physcomitrium pyriforme* (p. 565), *Pohlia* species (pp. 603–611) or *Aphanorhegma patens* (p. 567) might also conceivably be confused with *B. pallens*.

Habitat Moist, usually bare soil by streams, flushes, pools, river banks, roadsides, in disused quarries, the spoil of mines, on waste ground, in woodland rides and fields, dune slacks and on damp walls and rocks. *B. pallens* also grows in chalk grassland in southern England.