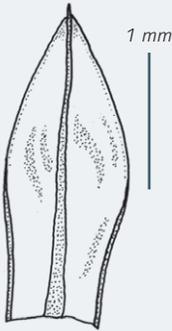


Bryum pallescens

Tall-clustered Thread-moss



Identification

Shoots form dense, dark to light green tufts or cushions, usually between 1 and 4 cm tall. Leaves are 2.5–3.5 mm long, with a well-defined border, do not run down onto the stem at the reddish base, and have a shortly excurrent nerve. Capsules are common in summer, 2.5–4 mm long, drooping or less often nearly horizontal, borne on a seta about 2–3 cm long.

Similar species

B. pallescens closely resembles several other *Bryum* species that can only be reliably distinguished when mature capsules are present and it is possible to examine microscopic features such as details of the outer and inner peristomes, diameters of spores, and occurrence of male and female inflorescences. It is therefore essential to collect plants with capsules that are ripe (but not too old), and often necessary to ignore non-fruiting colonies.

Similar species that are common include *B. algovicum* var. *rutheanum* (Smith, p. 556), *B. caespiticium* (p. 589) and *B. imbricatum* (Smith, p. 560). Typically, all three have a more longly excurrent nerve. They usually grow in base-rich habitats, and *B. algovicum* is especially common on sand dunes.

Similar species that are scarce include *B. creberrimum* (Smith, p. 562), *B. intermedium* (Smith, p. 561), *B. salinum* (Smith, p. 560) and *B. knowltonii* (Smith, p. 557). *B. intermedium* has leaves with a strongly recurved border and typically has slightly asymmetrical capsules. In addition, the capsules of *B. intermedium* often vary in maturity within a single tuft at the same time. *B. salinum* is very similar to *B. imbricatum*, but differs in having a red rather than orange mouth to the capsule.



B. knowltonii has shortly pear-shaped capsules on a rather long seta. Its capsules may mature from spring to late autumn. *B. salinum* is strictly coastal and *B. knowltonii* is predominantly coastal; both are known mainly from northern Britain.

Of other *Bryum* species that most resemble *B. pallescens*, *B. pseudotriquetrum* (p. 592) is best distinguished by its usually equidistant leaves with a base that runs down onto the stem.

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

Habitat *B. pallescens* particularly favours places that are polluted by metals – beneath dripping, galvanized roofs, metal roofs and windows, abandoned metal mines, and at the base of galvanized crash barriers. However, it also occurs in places that lack high concentrations of metals, such as soil in quarries and dunes, in crevices of rocks and walls, and on concrete.