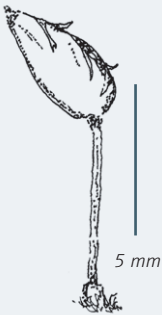
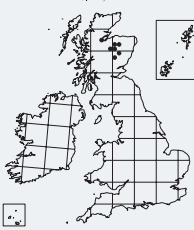


*Buxbaumia viridis*

Green Shield-moss

Key 85



## Identification

*B. viridis* lacks any obvious green leaves, and only a robust seta and capsule are visible. Large, green, more or less erect capsules, 5–8 mm in length, appear in autumn, and persist with little change until the following April, after which they rapidly turn brown, and tilt over at an angle to the seta. The upper surface of the capsule splits and peels away when ripe. Green capsules are often eaten, probably by slugs, and numerous seta without capsules can be found in larger stands of this species in late winter.

## Similar species

The erect, green, immature capsules of *B. viridis* are unmistakable. However, mature and dehiscent capsules tend to develop a rim around the margin of their upper face, reminiscent of *B. aphylla* (p. 336), and the two species can be confused at this stage. The mature capsule of *B. viridis* is set at more of an angle to the seta than that of *B. aphylla*, and the upper surface peels away, whilst that of *B. aphylla* does not.

## Habitat

*B. viridis* mainly grows on fallen dead wood, and all records are from north-east Scotland. The main host species are Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), alder (*Alnus*) and birch (*Betula*). More rarely it has been found on bird cherry (*Prunus padus*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and willow (*Salix*). It also grows on humus on bare patches of ground and on nests of wood ants (*Formica*). The majority of sites have a humid microclimate, and many are close to burns or rivers. On Scots pine logs, *B. viridis* usually grows on well-decayed, decorticated parts where the wood is becoming soft and spongy. Here the wood is typically bare or has a covering of small liverworts. Conversely, on alder and Norway spruce it is typically found on bark, growing through a mat of *Hypnum cupressiforme*. *B. viridis* is rare, but probably under-recorded. It should be searched for in any suitable wooded sites in north-east Scotland. This species must not be collected.