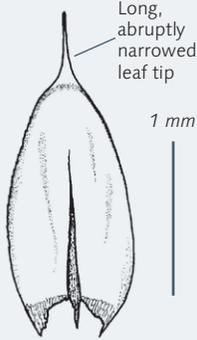


Cirriphyllum piliferum

Hair pointed Feather-moss

Key 362

**Identification**

This is one of our most easily identified pleurocarps. It is fairly robust, with shoots up to 10 cm or more in length. They are more or less pinnate, with relatively short side branches which spread at right angles to the main stem and are attenuated at the tip. The whole plant is pale, sometimes whitish-green, especially at the shoot and branch tips. The most distinctive feature is the egg-shaped to oblong leaves on the main stem. They are strongly concave, and contract abruptly at the tip to a long, hair-like point. They are 2–2.5 mm long, excluding the point. The single nerve reaches mid-leaf or above. Branch leaves are less abruptly contracted, with a tapering rather than thread-like point. Capsules are rare.

Similar species

No other species combines the pinnate branching with the abruptly thread-like tip of the stem leaves. Once known, *C. piliferum* can be recognized at some distance because of its distinctive branching and pale colour. The very rare *C. cirrosom* (*Brachythecium cirrosom*) (Smith, p. 838) is irregularly branched, and is only found above 700 m on a few of the higher mountains in Scotland. *Pseudoscleropodium purum* (p. 753) never has more than a short, abrupt point at the tip of the stem leaves. The rare *Myurium hochstetteri* (p. 678) of the Hebrides and adjacent mainland has a similar thread-like tip to the leaves, but is otherwise very different in colour and form.

Habitat

C. piliferum is rather common on the ground in woodland, on banks, at the base of old walls and among sheltered rocks and stones. It is most characteristic of base-rich habitats and on clay, and usually where there is some shade or shelter.