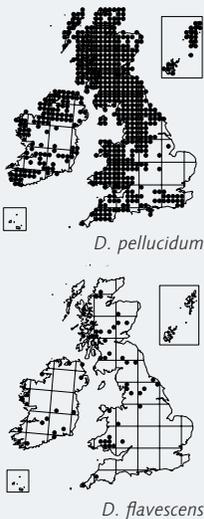


Dichodontium pellucidum/flavescens

Transparent/Yellowish Fork-moss

Key 212, 232



Identification

D. pellucidum is variable, but usually grows in lax, mid-green cushions or turfs, 1–7 cm high. Leaves are incurved and somewhat shrunken when dry, spreading and often markedly reflexed when moist. They are typically 1.5–2.5 mm long, 2.5 to 4 times as long as wide, spearhead- or egg-shaped from a relatively broad base, narrowing to an acute or blunt tip which is usually coarsely toothed. The nerve is stout and toothed at the back near the tip and the cells in the upper surface of the leaf have a very rough, uneven surface, which can be seen with a hand lens. Capsules are uncommon, egg-shaped and curved, and about 1–2 times as long as wide. *D. flavescens* is very similar to *D. pellucidum* and treated as synonymous by some bryologists. The main field character is the capsule; in *D. flavescens* this is straighter and 2–4 times as long as wide. The leaves in *D. flavescens* are also generally longer, some 4–5 times as long as wide, but in plants without fruit (as is usually the case) microscopical confirmation is necessary.

Similar species

Small plants may look somewhat like *Leptodontium flexifolium* (p. 444) but that moss is more slender, has a narrower leaf base and cells with much less obviously uneven surfaces, and a different texture. Small *Racomitrium aciculare* (p. 534) has shorter, blunter leaves with recurved margins (plane in *Dichodontium*). *D. flavescens* sometimes grows with and may resemble *Didymodon spadicus* (p. 458), but the leaves of *D. spadicus* do not have toothed margins.

Habitat

D. pellucidum is most common on gravel and silted rocks by streams and rivers, and on lake margins where stands can be large, but also occurs in a range of other wet or damp habitats. A very small form with reflexed leaves occurs in more exposed sites in the mountains, usually where the rock is base-rich, and this can look very different from the typical plant. *D. flavescens* is found in similar places to *D. pellucidum*, but perhaps most frequently on sites where there is some base-enrichment.