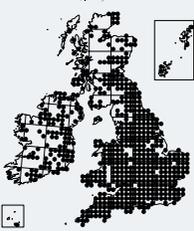


*Dicranella schreberiana**D. schreberiana*

Schreber's Forklet-moss

Key 143



Identification The green or yellowish-green, 2–3 mm long leaves of *D. schreberiana* have a conspicuously expanded base which clasps the stem (particularly obvious at the stem tip, where the broad upper part of the sheathing base is clearly visible). Above the base, the leaves taper to a long, narrow limb which is often recurved. Shoots are usually somewhat less than 1 cm tall. The species fruits fairly frequently; the seta is purple and the lid of the capsule has a moderately well-developed beak.

Similar species This is one of a group of similar (although not closely related) plants of disturbed ground. It is sometimes possible to identify well-grown specimens of these species in the field, but more usually the field characters can only be used to select material for collection and microscopical confirmation. When well-grown, *Trichodon cylindricus* (p. 342) has longer and narrower, slightly curly, whip-like leaves above the expanded base. In *Leptobryum pyriforme* (p. 576) the longest leaves are grouped at the top of the stem and they have a less sheathing base and a longer, narrower tip than those of *D. schreberiana*. Fortunately, microscopical identification is easy as the species all produce tubers freely and these have characteristic shapes. The rare *D. grevilleana* (Smith, p. 186) grows in the mountains on damp, base-rich soil on slopes, rock ledges and in disused quarries. Its capsules are slightly swollen at the base, and faintly ridged when dry. Plants which appear to be *D. schreberiana* in base-rich, montane sites should always be checked microscopically against this species.

Habitat *D. schreberiana* grows on disturbed soil in places such as stubble fields, woodland rides, ditch-sides and river banks. Although it occurs on a range of soils from mildly acidic to base-rich, it does not grow in the most acidic habitats. Unusually large plants of *D. schreberiana* sometimes grow in base-rich flushes in the uplands.