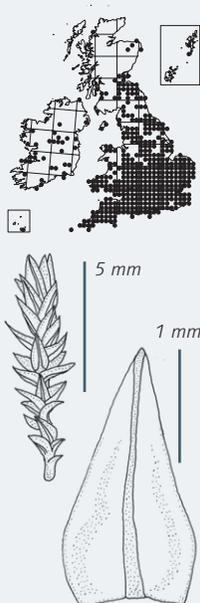


*Didymodon luridus**Barbula trifaria*

Dusky Beard-moss

Key 179, 192



Identification

Shoots are short (typically 0.5–1 cm tall), forming dark green tufts, sometimes tinged brown. Compared with other members of the genus, the concave leaves of *D. luridus* are broad relative to their length (about 1.25–1.75 mm long), with a rounded or bluntly pointed leaf tip. When dry, the leaves are held erect and appressed to the stem. Cylindrical capsules are very rare in winter, with short, pale yellowish peristome teeth.

Similar species

Most other *Didymodon* species have a less tapering leaf tip. *D. tophaceus* (p. 466) has a rounded leaf tip, but leaves that are narrower relative to their length, and do not appress the stem when dry. *D. rigidulus* (p. 459) has narrower leaves with a more attenuated tip. *D. nicholsonii* (p. 460) also has a more pointed leaf tip, and leaves that may be longer (1.5–3 mm long) than those of *D. luridus*. *D. fallax* (p. 457) has less concave leaves which are not held so erect, and are incurved when dry. Moreover, *D. fallax* grows on soil, not stone or wood. The very rare *D. cordatus* (Smith, p. 327) is known in Britain only from shallow soil over rock on the coast of north Devon, and is a taller moss (up to 10 mm tall), with leaves 1.5–2 cm long, a very wide, excurrent nerve, and margins recurved all the way to the leaf tip. *Ceratodon purpureus* (p. 354) has a more pointed leaf tip, and the shoots are normally a lighter green and may be tinged red. *Orthotrichum* species (pp. 646–657) on stone may look similar to *D. luridus* if non-fertile, with leaves that are of a similar shape, but longer (about 3.5–4.5 mm). Young *Schistidium crassipilum* (p. 511) has short hair points.

Habitat

D. luridus grows on base-rich, often moist rocks, stones and walls, for example in woods and around buildings. It may also grow on shallow soil, and occasionally on stones and tree roots in the flood zones of rivers, as well as on damp sand in dune slacks.