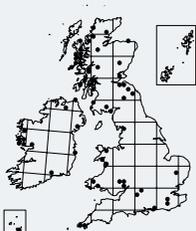


# *Grimmia decipiens*

Great Grimmia



**Identification** This relatively robust *Grimmia* forms dark green to almost black, loose cushions up to 3 cm or more deep (but often less) that break apart easily when removed from the substrate. Its leaves are about 4 mm long, slightly curled when dry, and spread out from the stem when moist. They have recurved margins that gradually taper into the leaf tip. The length of the white hair point varies, and can be as long as the leaf blade, thus giving the cushion a very hoary appearance. The key field character that suggests *G. decipiens* is the strongly toothed hair point (use a hand lens). Capsules are common in this monoicous species; they are symmetrical, with convex sides, ribbed, and are held on a curved (dry and moist) seta up to 3 mm in length.

**Similar species** *G. trichophylla* (p. 529) rarely has such a strongly toothed hair point and its capsules are comparatively rare. *G. pulvinata* (p. 526) also has capsules that turn back into the cushion, but it normally has a leaf tip that abruptly contracts into a weakly toothed hair point. Confusion with *Racomitrium heterostichum* (p. 537) is possible, but the distinctly flattened hair points of *Racomitrium* species is a useful field character. *G. muehlenbeckii* (*Journal of Bryology* 29, 188–193) is a rarer but probably under-recorded species that tends to have straighter leaves and hair points, with the leaves spreading at a wider angle than those of *G. decipiens*, but microscopical confirmation is necessary.

**Habitat** An uncommon and unpredictable plant found on a variety of rock types, including igneous outcrops and boulders, sarsen stones, Old Red Sandstone and Millstone Grit. It favours full sun, and is almost entirely restricted to low altitudes. Several colonies in the Welsh Borders and in southern England are found on stone-tiled roofs.