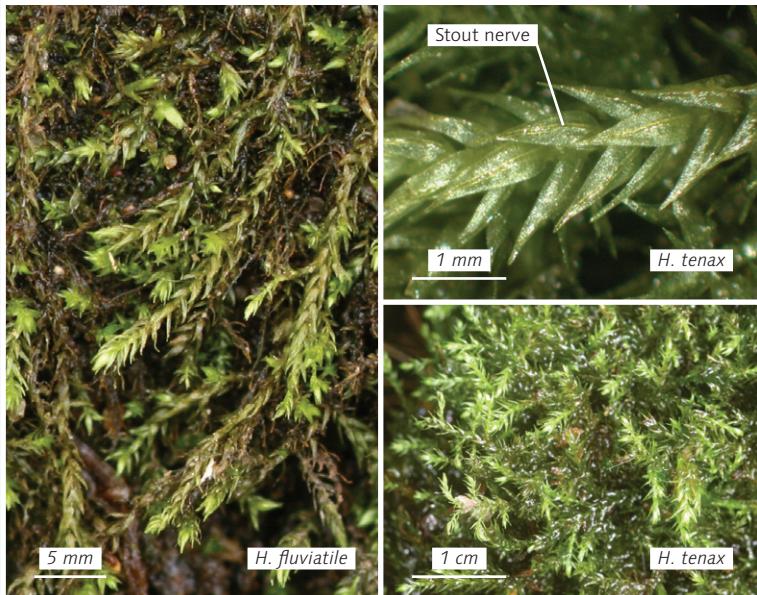
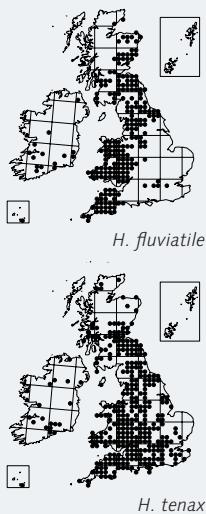


*Hygroamblystegium fluviatile/tenax**Amblystegium fluviatile/tenax*

Brook-side/Fountain Feather-moss

Key 327



Identification

These two species are very variable, forming smallish to robust, dingy green patches and tufts. In some forms, the shoots have short, more or less pinnate branches; other forms have fewer elongated branches that are parallel to the stem. The latter may form large floating tufts many centimetres long. Stem leaves reach about 1.5 mm, are egg- or spearhead-shaped, and somewhat concave. The most distinctive feature is the very stout nerve that reaches the leaf tip. Branch leaves are similar. *H. tenax* is typically more rigid than *H. fluviatile*, with pinnate branching and an acute leaf tip. *H. fluviatile* has irregular, elongated branches and a blunt leaf tip. However, these distinctions are not constant, and plants with the branching of *H. fluviatile* and leaf form of *H. tenax* may occur. *H. tenax* forms capsules more frequently than *H. fluviatile*; they are inclined and about 2.5 mm long.

Similar species

Small forms of *H. tenax* come close to *Amblystegium varium* (p. 703) and may not be distinguishable without microscopical examination. However, *A. varium* tends to occur in marshes or wet ground, rather than in streams. Some forms of *Hygrohypnum luridum* (p. 731) have a long nerve, and are often found on rocks in upland streams. They usually occur above normal water level, the nerve is not so stout, and the leaves are nearly always slightly or strongly curved, especially near the shoot tip. *Cratoneuron filicinum* (p. 701) often has distinctive, pale shoot tips and it tends to have curved leaves. It also differs in its clearly differentiated patches of cells at the leaf base, best observed on the stem leaves.

Habitat

H. fluviatile is characteristic of fast-flowing streams on neutral to base-rich rocks, such as limestone and sandstone. It is usually attached to rocks, less often roots and base of trees. *H. tenax* occurs in a wider range of habitats and tends to be a more lowland plant. It occurs on stones and tree roots, but also on concrete, bricks, weirs and other man-made substrates. It may also occur on rocks and stones where water trickles.