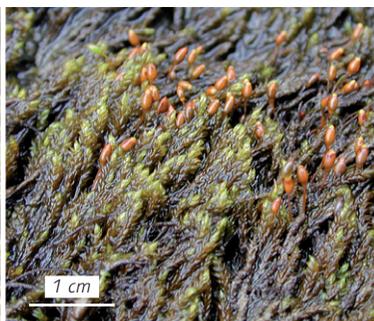
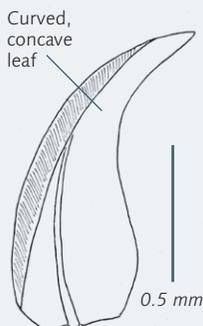
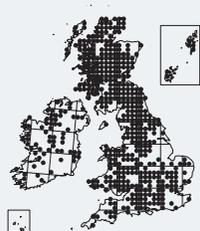


Hygrohypnum luridum

Drab Brook-moss

Key 311



Identification *H. luridum* is very variable, forming irregular patches with prostrate to erect branches. Plants vary from slender shoots on moist rock to robust plants on boulders in streams. The leaves are curved (sometimes strongly) and concave, often with the margins somewhat incurved towards the tip. They vary in shape from broadly egg-shaped with a blunt tip to narrowly egg-shaped with an acute tip, about 1–1.5 mm long. They usually have a single nerve; this may extend almost to the leaf tip. Egg-shaped capsules 2 mm long are often present, and raised on an elongated seta.

Similar species Larger forms may resemble *H. ochraceum* (p. 730). A useful field pointer is the frequent occurrence of *H. luridum* on limestone, but it also occurs in less base-rich habitats. *H. eugyrium* (p. 734) has a patch of coloured cells in the basal corners of its leaves, and is confined to western and northern regions. *Brachythecium plumosum* (p. 751) may also be similar. Small forms of *H. luridum* with broad, weakly curved leaves can resemble *Rhynchostegium confertum* (p. 761), which may occur on moist stones. The best pointers are the curved leaves of *H. luridum* (rarely almost straight), and the beaked lid of the capsule in *R. confertum*. *H. styriacum* (Smith, p. 803) is a very rare species known from wet granite rock crevices at one locality in Scotland. It differs from *H. luridum* in its broadly egg-shaped leaves that rather abruptly contract to a tip. *Hygroamblystegium* species (p. 706) do not have curved leaves. Slender forms of *H. luridum* resemble *Sematophyllum micans* (p. 793), which has thread-like shoots, but these forms are not normally found in the Atlantic habitats where *S. micans* occurs.

Habitat *H. luridum* grows most often on rock, but sometimes on tree roots. It favours boulders and rocks by streams in upland regions (often above normal water levels, and not on very acidic substrates), inclined rock faces and stones, especially where these are base-rich and at least intermittently irrigated, and walls and stonework in sheltered, shaded places, including some lowland habitats such as churchyards.

Photos David Holyoak (left), Michael Lüth (top right) & Des Callaghan (bottom right)
Drawing & Text Tom Blockeel