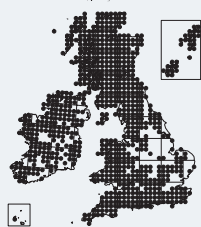


Hylocomium splendens

Glittering Wood-moss

Key 336

**Identification**

This glossy, bright green, robust moss has regularly arranged, branched branches (bipinnate) and a red stem. Shoots are several to 10 or even 20 cm long. A 'flight of steps' appearance to the shoots is a consequence of varying rates of growth during successive seasons from a bud behind the shoot tip. Stem leaves are quite large, 2.5–3 mm long, and oval with a long, tapering tip. Branch leaves are smaller (1 mm long), more concave and have a shorter tip. Both types of leaf have a short, double nerve (or may lack a nerve) and sharply toothed margins in the upper half. Under a hand lens, the stems and branches appear furry owing to the presence of branched filaments. Capsules are generally uncommon, but occasional in parts of south Wales and may be overlooked.

Similar species

Thuidium tamariscinum (p. 696) is also bipinnate and may grow in similar habitats, but has a green (rather than red) stem, which becomes black on older stems. Also, stem leaves of *T. tamariscinum* are a different shape, having a shorter point, and they have a prominent single nerve. *Pleurozium schreberi* (p. 815) also has a red stem, and is loosely pinnate, but its leaves are bluntly pointed.

Habitat

H. splendens is common and may be abundant amongst grass and heather on heaths and moorlands and in acidic woodlands. Whilst usually occurring in acidic habitats, it may sometimes be found in well-leached chalk grassland.