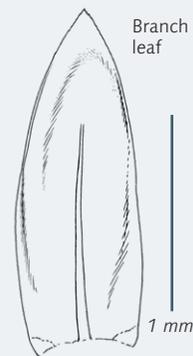
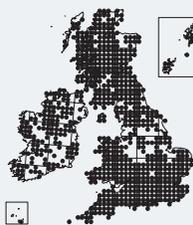


*Isoetecium alopecuroides**I. myurum*

Larger Mouse-tail Moss

Key 333



## Identification

*I. alopecuroides* is distinctively pale or yellowish-green. It is usually fairly robust, with shoots commonly 2–6 cm long, but smaller forms occur. The plants are bushy, with the branches curving downwards. The branch leaves are typically 2 mm long, egg-shaped to elliptical, concave, appressed and overlapping, giving the branches a neatly cylindrical appearance. They do not alter much when dry. The leaf tip is broadly pointed to acute, not drawn out to a fine point, and only finely toothed. The single nerve extends above mid-leaf. Stem leaves are similar to the branch leaves, but a little larger, with a slightly longer tip. Capsules appear occasionally, and are elliptical to cylindrical, and erect. The lid is beaked.

## Similar species

*I. alopecuroides* usually differs from *I. myosuroides* (p. 736) in its larger size, pale colour and shortly pointed leaves. Branch leaves of *I. alopecuroides* may exceed 2 mm in length, while those of *I. myosuroides* are commonly 1–1.5 mm. However, *I. alopecuroides* is very variable in size, and the two species might be mistaken if the leaf shape is not observed carefully. Habitat can be a useful guide, as *I. myosuroides* grows on base-poor rocks and *I. alopecuroides* on base-rich ones. Laxer forms of *Scleropodium cespitosum* (p. 754) may resemble *I. alopecuroides*, though *S. cespitosum* normally grows in denser, flatter patches, often embedded in silt. Small, bushy forms of *Thamnobryum alopecurum* (p. 684) can be distinguished by their coarsely toothed leaves. *Cirriphyllum crassinervium* (p. 757) lacks a bushy growth form and its leaves are rapidly contracted to a shortly pointed tip.

## Habitat

*I. alopecuroides* occurs in woodland, on stream banks and other sheltered places, most commonly on the lower part of tree trunks and on the roots. It also occurs on rocks and stones, especially where base-rich. It does not occur on the more acidic substrates often occupied by *I. myosuroides*, though the two species sometimes grow near each other. It is mainly a lowland species, rarely ascending to moderate altitudes.

Photos David Holyoak (left) & Gordon Rothero (right) Drawing Sean Edwards Text Tom Blockeel