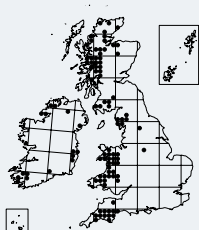


Isothecium holtii

Holt's Mouse-tail Moss



Identification Like *I. myosuroides*, *I. holtii* has a bushy or sometimes tree-like growth form, with shoots growing away from the substrate. Its crowded branches are usually more numerous in the upper part of the shoots, and arch downwards. The plants become distinctively bronzed or orange-brown. Shoots are commonly 2–5 cm long. Stem leaves are 2 mm long. Branch leaves are about 1.5 mm long, overlapping, neatly appressed to slightly spreading when both moist and dry, and are egg-shaped to elliptical, with a shorter point than *I. myosuroides*. They have a single nerve, and are very finely toothed. Capsules are rare.

Similar species *I. myosuroides* (p. 736) is smaller, with green shoots and a more finely drawn out leaf tip. Otherwise, *I. holtii* most closely resembles *Thamnobryum alopecurum* (p. 684) with which it may grow, but *T. alopecurum* is usually more obviously tree-like, and its trunk-like stems have broadly triangular, scale-like leaves. *Thamnobryum* is often dark or blackish-green, and not normally bronzed. Dry *Pterogonium gracile* (p. 677) may resemble *I. holtii* in form and colour, but occurs on dry rocks, and its leaves spread outwards rapidly on moistening. It also differs in its short, double nerve.

Habitat *I. holtii* is characteristic of rocky stream banks in rocky woods and ravines, where it grows on the sides of boulders, often in extensive patches, and sometimes also on tree bases and roots. It nearly always grows close to water, but is not normally submerged. It occurs primarily on siliceous and base-poor rocks.