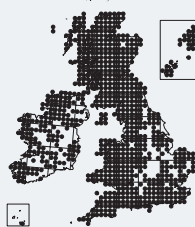


Pleurozium schreberi

Red-stemmed Feather-moss

Key 339



Identification The loosely pinnate branches and bright red stem showing through translucent green leaves are usually easy to recognize. When dry, the red stems only become visible on wetting, or after scraping leaves off the stem. Shoots are several centimetres long. The leaves, about 2–2.5 mm long, are oval with a broad, blunt tip; they are also very concave and envelope the stem. Stem and branch leaves are similar in shape, but the branch leaves are rather smaller. The leaf has a short, double nerve (but this may be absent) and thick-walled, orange-brown cells in the basal corners. Capsules are rare in this species.

Similar species *Pseudoscleropodium purum* (p. 753) is similar in shape and colour, but has a green rather than red stem and a short-pointed tip to the leaf. *Entodon concinnus* (p. 774) is also somewhat similar, but it too has a green rather than red stem. *Calliergonella cuspidata* (p. 797) is also similar, but rather less regularly pinnate and usually more flattened. The basal marginal cells in leaves of *C. cuspidata* lack any orange-brown colour. Also, *C. cuspidata* often has a green stem, although it may be red or orange. However, the way in which the leaves of *Calliergonella* wrap the stem and branch tips to form a spear-point shape should distinguish it from *P. schreberi*.

Habitat *P. schreberi* avoids calcareous or base-rich habitats, and is most commonly found amongst grass and heather on heathland and in open, heathy woods. In such places, it can be truly abundant. *P. schreberi* also commonly occurs in bogs with ling heather (*Calluna*) and cotton-grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*).