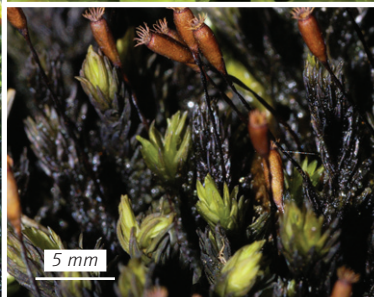
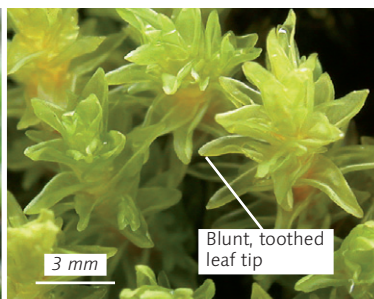
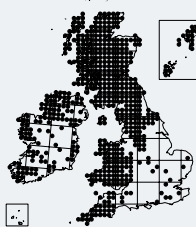


Racomitrium aciculare

Yellow Fringe-moss

Key 200



Identification A widespread and locally dominant moss in rivers in western Britain. Shoots are 2 to several centimetres long. Although it frequently lives up to its English name, with a yellow-green colour, *R. aciculare* is often dark green or almost black. The 2.5–3.5 mm long, blunt leaves, which usually have teeth that are visible through a hand lens, are unique and diagnostic. The long (about 3 mm), narrow, straight capsules on a long seta are also almost unique in the regular haunts of *Racomitrium* species.

Similar species None of the other British *Racomitrium* species that lack hair points, such as *R. aquaticum* (p. 535), have such a blunt leaf tip or have teeth. The yellow-green colour and toothed margins resemble *Dichodontium pellucidum* (p. 361), which grows in similar places, and can look very like turfs of young *R. aciculare*. However, *D. pellucidum* never has such short, blunt, rounded leaves as *R. aciculare*, its marginal teeth are sharper and its leaf margins are plane, whereas those of *R. aciculare* are recurved. Plants with curved leaves can resemble *Schistidium rivulare* (p. 507) or *S. apocarpum* (p. 510), but the leaves of both these species have a more acute tip, and the distinctive capsules can usually be found by searching. *Cinclidotus fontinaloides* (p. 502) is of similar size and also riparian, but its leaves have very distinct thickened borders.

Habitat Many wet, rocky places support *R. aciculare*, but it becomes particularly profuse on top of rocks in fast-flowing, base-poor rivers in the west and north. Although it grows in the mountains, it is more abundant at relatively low altitudes. Flushed rock outcrops are another favoured habitat and *R. aciculare* can also be found occasionally on bridge parapets, on damp, slate roofs or on flat, siliceous gravestones.