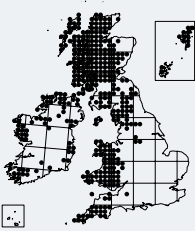


Racomitrium aquaticum

Narrow-leaved Fringe-moss

Key 200



Identification *R. aquaticum* is much less of a riparian plant than *R. aciculare*, but its English name is suitable as it looks rather like a narrow-leaved version of that species. It usually grows on nearly vertical rock faces as sheets of long (to 10 cm), pendent and little-branched, olive-green shoots. The 2–3 mm long, narrow, round-tipped leaves without a hair point are distinctive.

Similar species The narrow leaves lack marginal teeth, and differ from the broad, blunt leaves of *R. aciculare* (p. 534), whilst the unbranched shoots distinguish *R. aquaticum* from *R. fasciculare* (p. 538). Forms of *R. heterostichum* (p. 537) without hair points are trickier to distinguish. These tend to be a lot smaller and more regularly branched, generally growing as discrete patches on boulders rather than as pendent sheets on rock faces. Through a hand lens, the margins of many leaves on *R. aquaticum* shoots are plane above halfway, whereas almost all leaves on *R. heterostichum* shoots have both margins recurved to the tip. *Grimmia ramondii* (p. 532) has a similarly little-branched growth form, but a hand lens will reveal its acute leaf tip and the winged back of the nerve.

Habitat *R. aquaticum* typically grows on vertical, siliceous rock faces on exposed or shaded mountain crags, on tors, or in gorges. Less often, it is found on flat surfaces or the sides of boulders. Like *R. aciculare*, it likes rocks that are periodically flushed by water, but unlike that species it never grows in near-permanently inundated places.