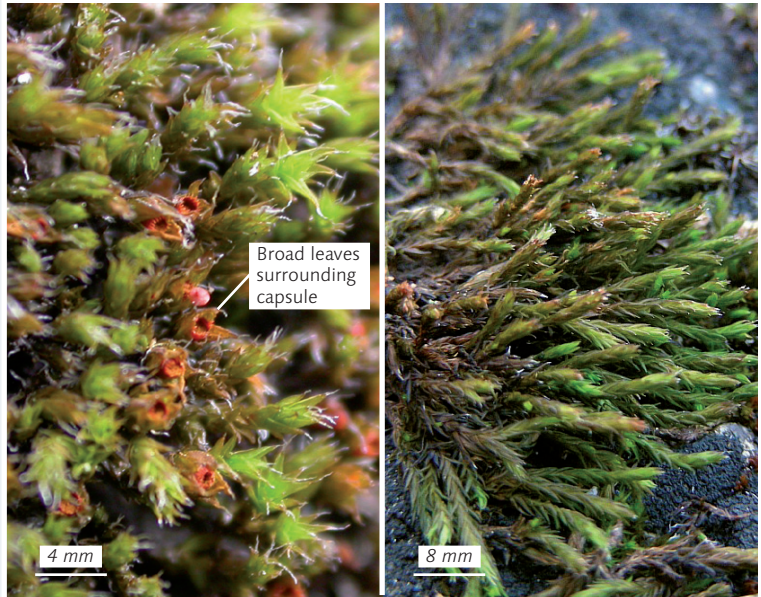
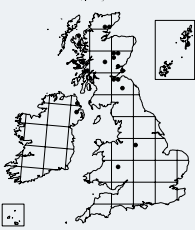


Schistidium pruinosum

Mealy Grimmia



Identification This uncommon *Schistidium* is identified by its combination of relatively broad leaves (for the genus) and strikingly stiff, straight, robust hair points. It grows as low, very hoary cushions, which are often filled with fine dust. Shoots are 1.5–3 cm long. The oblong capsules are more or less hidden by very broad (1 mm wide) leaves surrounding them. These leaves are even wider than the leaves below. Lower leaves are 2–2.5 mm long, whereas the leaves surrounding the capsule are about 3 mm long. The leaves have roughened surfaces, so look dull and less shiny than those of other members of the genus.

Similar species The wide leaves and strong hair point make *S. pruinosum* relatively easy to name provisionally in the field, but it is essential to check for the presence of a roughened leaf surface under a microscope. *S. strictum* (p. 515), its most frequent associate, differs in often having orange leaves with a narrow upper part and a wavy hair point.

Habitat There are relatively few British records of this species, but it appears to be fairly frequent on dry, sunny, exposed rocks in parts of Scotland, especially on basalt in the Inner Hebrides. It has only been recorded from low or moderate altitudes.