

# BBS field-guide

A team of BBS members is continuing to work on the field-guide to British and Irish bryophytes continues. A sample account is given below, and others can be viewed at [www.bryosoft.co.uk/fieldguide](http://www.bryosoft.co.uk/fieldguide).

If you are willing to contribute to this venture, for example by writing species accounts or providing photographs, please contact Mark Lawley at 12A Castlevue Terrace, Ludlow, SY8 2NG; e-mail: [m.lawley@virgin.net](mailto:m.lawley@virgin.net).

***Pottia starkeana***  
(Syn. *Microbryum starkeanum*)

Starke's Pottia

***Pottia davalliana***  
(Syn: *Microbryum davallianum*)

Smallest Pottia

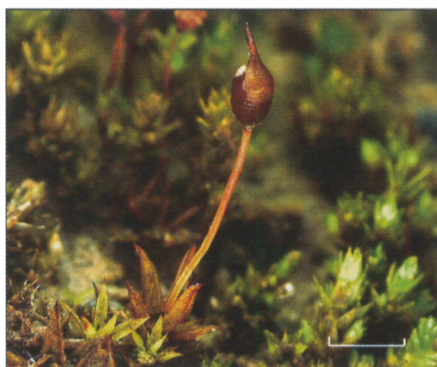
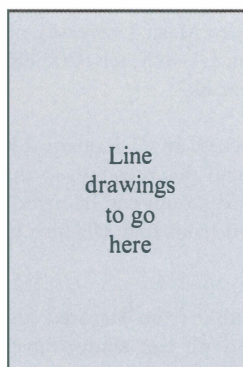


Photo: D. Callaghan

Scale bar = 1mm



## Identification

Two very small ephemeral mosses occurring as scattered or gregarious plants. Leaves are ovate-lanceolate with recurved margins and an excurrent costa. The seta is 1.0-2.5 mm long and the capsules are narrowly cylindrical to top-shaped. The dark reddish-brown capsules draw attention to the plants in the field, though careful searching at ground level is usually needed. Capsules occur throughout the year, though are relatively rare in summer. These two species can only be distinguished by examining their spores under a compound microscope.

## Similar species

*Tortula truncata*, which has plane leaf margins (recurved in *P. davalliana* and *P. starkeana*), is a larger plant (e.g. setae 2-3.5 mm long as opposed to 1.0-2.5 mm in *P. davalliana* and *P. starkeana*) and has a truncate capsule (narrowly cylindrical to top-shaped in *P. davalliana* and *P.*

*starkeana*).

## Habitat

Both species occur on disturbed, lime-rich soil (less so in coastal areas) in a variety of lowland habitats, for example arable fields, calcareous grassland, woodland rides and on cliffs. *P. davalliana* is reasonably frequent in lowland England and Wales, while *P. starkeana* seems to be much rarer and most often encountered in coastal areas.



*P. starkeana*



*P. davalliana*