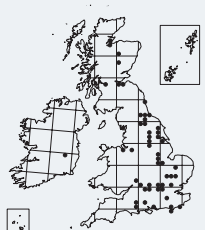


Aloina brevirostris/rigida

Short-beaked/Rigid Aloe-moss

Key 89

*A. brevirostris/rigida**A. brevirostris**A. rigida*

Identification In the field, it is not normally possible to reliably tell these two species apart, and they can only be identified to species-pair level. They are the smallest members of *Aloina*, at 1–2 mm in height, and usually occur as dull, greenish or brownish patches. *A. rigida* also sometimes occurs as scattered plants. The leaves of both species are stiff and arranged in a rosette. Both have untoothed, succulent, very short (less than 2 mm long), round-tipped leaves with incurved margins that appear hooded. Those of *A. rigida* may also appear to be distinctly concave. Capsules are common from autumn to spring.

Similar species No other rosette-forming species tend to be as small as *A. brevirostris* and *A. rigida*. *A. aloides* (p. 472) and *A. ambigua* (p. 473) are larger at 2–5 mm tall, and have much longer, narrower leaves which usually appear pointed. Exceptionally small specimens of *Pogonatum nanum* (p. 316) could be confused with species of *Aloina*, but inspection with a hand lens will quickly reveal obvious differences, including coarsely toothed leaves, and a hairy calyptra (which is always hairless in *Aloina*).

Habitat Both species are rare in the British Isles. *A. brevirostris* occurs on chalky ground in southern England, and on Magnesian Limestone in northern England and in Scotland. Typical habitats include chalk pits, cuttings and hillsides. *A. rigida* is scattered in chalk and limestone districts across the British Isles, preferring rather bare ground on banks and cliffs and in pits and quarries. It especially favours very thin layers of soil on limestone ledges.