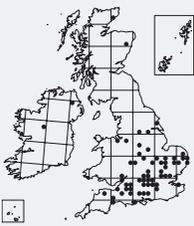


*Amblystegium humile**Hygroamblystegium humile*

Constricted Feather-moss



Identification

A. humile occurs as scattered shoots or in lax, medium-sized, untidy patches. The stem leaves grow to about 1.5 mm long. Leaves have the usual broad, spearhead shape of other *Amblystegium* species, but are noticeably narrowed at the base, and do not or hardly run down onto the stem. Useful field pointers are the widely spreading position of the leaves, and the long, single nerve which ceases below the leaf tip. When capsules are present, they are borne on a strikingly long (2–4 cm), wavy seta, and this is a particularly useful field character.

Similar species

Leptodictyum riparium (p. 707) is normally larger than *A. humile*; *L. riparium* differs in having a straight (not wavy) seta that is not strikingly long. In *A. varium* (p. 703) the nerve reaches the leaf tip, but this may need to be checked under a microscope. *Drepanocladus polygamus* (p. 713) has a finely tapering leaf tip. *A. radiale* (Smith, p. 767) differs from *A. humile* in the leaf base that forms a narrow strip of tissue down the stem. This is usually discernible on at least some of the leaves of the main stems. *A. radiale* was thought to be an exceptionally rare species in Britain, but it has recently been found in a number of new localities and may have been overlooked at the base of dead reed (*Phragmites*) stems in reed beds, and as occasional stems in arable fields (where their occurrence is presumably casual). Earlier finds were among rushes (*Juncus*) and on rotten branches of willow (*Salix*) in a damp, shallow hollow in an old china clay works in Cornwall, and among tussocks of purple moor-grass (*Molinia*) in a bog in Wales.

Habitat

A. humile grows in marshes and muddy places, especially by pools, occurring on soil and tree bases, but it appears to be uncommon. It also occurs on stones and silty banks by streams.