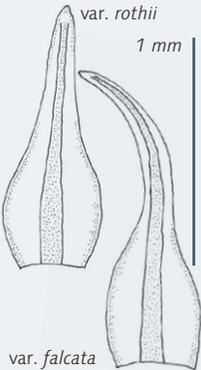
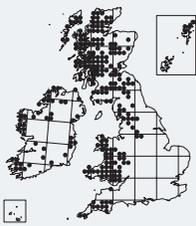


# *Andreaea rothii* subsp. *falcata*/ subsp. *rothii*

Hunt's/Dusky Rock-moss

Key 197



### Identification

*A. rothii* forms dark brown to almost black cushions which often coalesce to form large patches with shoots up to 2 cm tall, but usually smaller. The leaves are 1–2 mm long, usually turned to one side when moist and can be strongly curved. They alter little when dry. The nerve is usually well-defined and fills the upper part of the leaf. The leaf has an egg-shaped basal part which is abruptly contracted to the long upper part with an acute tip. Two subspecies are recognized in Britain; subsp. *falcata* appears to be the more common of the two and has strongly curved leaves and an excurrent nerve filling much of the upper part of the leaf; subsp. *rothii* has less curved leaves and the leaf-blade cells are distinct up to the leaf tip. Many plants in Britain seem to have a mixture of these characters and are difficult to assign to either subspecies.

### Similar species

*A. rothii* can be distinguished from *A. rupestris* (p. 312) by the nerved leaf and the rather different habit of the often extensive black patches on wet rock. Other species of *Andreaea* with nerved leaves, *A. frigida*, *A. megistospora*, *A. blyttii* (Smith, pp. 113–115) and *A. nivalis* (p. 315) are much less common. *A. frigida* differs from *A. rothii* in its larger size, broader and more gradually tapering leaves, and blunter leaf tip with the leaf blade visibly distinct from the nerve right to the tip. The red-brown, coarsely textured cushions are also quite distinctive. *A. megistospora* is comparatively small, but can only be distinguished microscopically. The upper part of the leaf of *A. blyttii* is very narrow, and the patches have a flattened habit, looking like soot scattered on the surface of boulders. *A. nivalis* is a larger species, grows in reddish-brown cushions and has narrow, spearhead-shaped leaves. *A. blyttii*, *A. frigida* and *A. nivalis* are confined almost exclusively to snowbeds.

### Habitat

Found on exposed, wet or periodically irrigated, acidic rocks and often forming large patches where water trickles down slabby crags. Most frequent in the higher mountains, but also occurring near sea level.

*Photos* Des Callaghan (left), Robert Goodson (top right) & David Holyoak (bottom right)  
*Drawing* Jonathan Graham Text Gordon Rothero