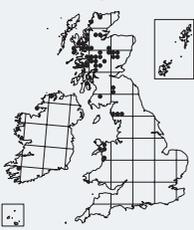


Arctoa fulvella

Arctic Fork-moss



Identification Grows in rather dense, yellow-green cushions or linear turfs up to 3 cm deep. The 4–4.5 mm long leaves usually point somewhat in one direction (and may do so strongly), but may also be erect and wavy. They are little altered when dry. The leaves taper gradually to a long, fine point which is composed mostly of nerve. The nerve is longly excurrent. Capsules are often present, erect, egg-shaped and slightly asymmetrical, with an open mouth and spreading peristome teeth when dry. The seta is relatively stout and short, with the capsule usually overtopped by the longest leaves.

Similar species When fertile, the erect, open-mouthed capsules with (usually) spreading peristome teeth are quite distinctive, and confusion with other species is unlikely. Non-fertile plants can be confused with *Kiaeria blyttii* (p. 374), *K. falcata* (p. 373) and possibly *K. starkei* (p. 375), and microscopical examination may be necessary to determine them. The common *Blindia acuta* (p. 544) is a more likely source of confusion for the beginner, but that is a plant of wet places and normally much darker green, with orange cells in the basal corners of the leaves, and a different capsule. The closely related *A. andersonii* (*Journal of Bryology* 31, 76–79) has recently been found in Scotland and differs in the very short seta so that the capsule is hidden between the leaves.

Habitat Grows in sheltered crevices in montane crags and often favours humid conditions in gullies or along the base of cliffs. Cushions are usually small, and stands are often limited to just a few cushions, sometimes becoming more abundant where the plant spreads along crack lines in crags. Probably most frequent in places where snow lies late in the year, but descending to below 400 m in the north-west of Scotland.