

*Cinclidotus fontinaloides*

Smaller Lattice-moss

Key 163, 201, 326



## Identification

This is one of several robust, dark green mosses that occur on the shores of rivers and lakes. The sparingly branched, somewhat trailing, 2–15 cm long shoots bear large (about 4 mm long), often asymmetrical leaves that are narrowly egg-shaped, and have a strong nerve ending in the tip. The leaf margins are heavily thickened, forming a conspicuous border from base to tip (in older parts of the plant, tattered remnants of border and midrib may be all that survive after abrasion). When dry, the leaves are wavy to spirally twisted. Narrowly elliptically shaped capsules are frequent, but the seta is very short (less than 1 mm), so they are partly buried amongst the leaves.

## Similar species

*C. riparius* (Smith, p. 390) has more symmetrical leaves which are scarcely twisted when dry. Like the leaves of *C. fontinaloides*, the leaves of *C. riparius* have a thickened border, and a nerve which disappears in the leaf tip, but these features are slightly less evident than in *C. fontinaloides*. *C. riparius* may also look more black than *C. fontinaloides*, and typically grows lower in the flood zone of rivers. However, certain distinction between these species requires microscopical examination of leaf sections. Several superficially similar species can be found in the same habitat: *Schistidium rivulare* (p. 507) lacks such a conspicuously thickened leaf border; *Racomitrium aciculare* (p. 534) has leaves with a bluntly rounded tip; *Fontinalis* species (pp. 670–671) lack a nerve. *Dialytrichia mucronata* (p. 446) leaves are distinctly spirally twisted.

## Habitat

On intermittently but frequently submerged rocks, tree roots and stonework beside rivers and lakes, particularly in upland Britain; found on limestone and on siliceous rocks, but avoiding markedly acidic waters and thus absent from or rare in many upland rivers. It is most abundant in places subject to more frequent inundation than *Schistidium rivulare* and *Racomitrium aciculare*, but cannot tolerate the prolonged submersion favoured by *Fontinalis* species.