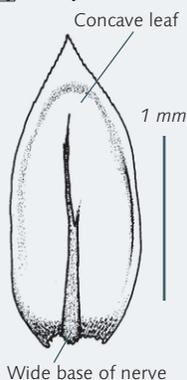
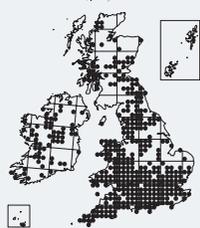


Cirriphyllum crassinervium

Eurhynchium crassinervium

Beech Feather-moss



Identification

A medium-sized, irregularly branched moss that forms wide, green patches. Branches are erect, or prostrate with ascending tips that often all point in the same direction. The most important field characters are the leaves – egg-shaped, concave, loosely appressed, overlapping, and rapidly narrowing above mid-leaf to a short, fairly wide, tapering point. The rapid contraction is distinctive, but the tip of the leaf is not as thread-like as in *C. piliferum*. The upper part of the leaf is finely toothed. When dry, the leaves become flatter, sometimes a little shrunken, losing their swollen, concave shape. The shoots then become rather untidy. The nerve is very stout below, but quickly vanishes above mid-leaf, and often has a secondary branch or spur part way along (sometimes detectable with a hand lens). The larger leaves are about 1.5–2 mm long. Capsules are rather rare, about 2 mm long, curved and egg-shaped. The lid has a very long beak that may be almost as long as the capsule.

Similar species

Scleropodium cespitosum (p. 754) forms denser patches with smoother, more distinctly unidirectional branches. When dry, however, the leaves and shoots of *S. cespitosum* are little altered. The latter character also distinguishes *S. tourettii* (p. 755), which has broadly pointed leaves with a more slender nerve. *Isoetium alopecuroides* (p. 737) has concave leaves, but they narrow to a broader point than in *C. crassinervium*, the plants have a bushier growth form, and are pale or whitish-green. Several other species, including *Brachythecium rutabulum* (p. 746) and *B. plumosum* (p. 751), may resemble *C. crassinervium*, but they do not have such strongly concave leaves, nor are the leaves suddenly contracted to a short point.

Habitat

C. crassinervium is locally frequent on base-rich stones, rocks, old walls, and base and roots of trees, for example in woodland on chalk in the south, and limestone valleys in the west and north. It also occasionally grows on tree bases in the flood zone of streams and rivers, with associates such as *Leskea polycarpa*.

Photos Michael Lüth Drawing Malcolm Watling Text Tom Blockeel