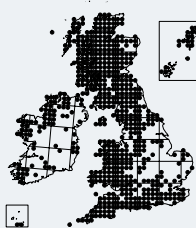


Dicranum majus

Greater Fork-moss

Key 128



Identification A large and handsome species, often forming extensive, lax patches. The very long (to 15 mm) leaves are characteristically and uniformly curved (sometimes described as scimitar-shaped) and hardly alter when dry. The leaves are narrowly spearhead-shaped and taper to a long fine tip which is regularly toothed. The nerve, which extends into the tip, is also toothed at the back, but lacks raised lines of cells. In the wetter north and west of Britain, *D. majus* frequently produces capsules, often several from one shoot, and these have a yellow seta.

Similar species Most likely to be confused with robust *D. scoparium* (p. 378), but the size of the plants and the regularly curved leaves should be enough to reach a decision; if you are in doubt, then it is not *D. majus*. When present, the uniformly yellow setae are a confirmatory character. *Dicranodontium* species (pp. 388–390) all have nerves that occupy a much greater proportion of the leaf's width at the base.

Habitat A plant of sheltered, acidic ground, almost always on soil, only occurring on rock where there is a build-up of organic material. It is common in woodland and ravines in the north and west where it also occurs on more open ground in scree, on crags and on heathy banks.