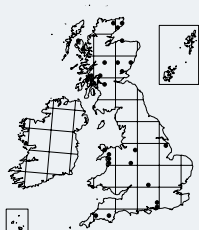


Ditrichum pusillum

Brown Ditrichum



Identification *D. pusillum* is intermediate in appearance between the long-leaved *D. heteromallum* and the short-leaved *D. lineare*. Its brownish-green shoots are usually less than 8 mm tall and have straight, appressed leaves, 2–3 mm long, that taper gradually to an acute (but not longly drawn-out) tip. The recurved leaf margins are just about visible with a 20 hand lens. Most of the small number of British records are of fruiting plants, identified by their long reddish setae, and upright, narrow-mouthed capsules with a long-beaked lid. The few from arable land are of dwarf, non-fruiting plants, and picking them out in the field is a considerable challenge.

Similar species Nondescript, even for a *Ditrichum*, and so confusable with several species and probably somewhat overlooked. The commoner *D. heteromallum* (p. 346) has much longer, narrow leaves, which are often curved to one side. *D. lineare* (p. 344) has shorter leaves and very narrow shoots. *D. zonatum* (p. 347) grows in tight tufts. *Dicranella staphylina* (p. 369) has plane leaf margins and has not been recorded with capsules in Britain. *Dicranella rufescens* (p. 367) has a reddish shoot base and a short beak to its capsule lid. *Ceratodon purpureus* (p. 354) usually has faint teeth at the tip of its leaves and is shinier than *D. pusillum*.

Habitat A very uncommon (or overlooked) plant of sandy or gravelly, acidic quarries and banks. Also recorded from a few acidic arable fields.