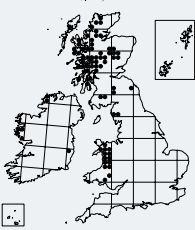


Ditrichum zonatum

Alpine Ditrichum



Identification Forming dark to mid-green patches or groups of stems to 3 cm tall, but often much shorter. The fragile stems are rather glossy above and may be reddish-brown below. The taller stems can show annual growth zones. The leaves are up to 1 mm long, usually erect, tapering to a short point, but some stands have leaves that point slightly in one direction and have longer, finer points. Capsules are unknown in Britain.

Similar species Can be difficult to distinguish from plants of *D. heteromallum* (p. 346) without capsules, but that moss has a different habit and colour, and leaves with longer, finer points.

Habitat A moss of shallow, stony soils in the high mountains, but descending lower in north-west Scotland. It is most frequent in sheltered niches in gullies or at the base of crags, but the largest stands are usually associated with disturbed soils where snow lies late in the year, or on open, stony, wind-blasted ridges.