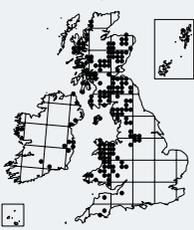


Grimmia donniana

Donn's Grimmia

Key 124



Identification

This is perhaps the commonest montane *Grimmia*. It forms small, low, rounded, dark green to almost black cushions or sprawling tufts usually less than 1 cm deep, which do not readily fall apart when scraped off the rock. Cushions usually have numerous erect capsules, giving them the appearance of pincushions. The leaves are 2.5–3.5 mm long, straight when dry, with obvious keels, and held close to the stem; they spread out slightly when moist. They have plane margins, and taper gradually into a hair point that is not obviously toothed and varies in length: in some colonies it is longer than the leaf itself, imparting a hoary appearance to the cushions; in others it is very short. The abundant capsules are conspicuous. When approaching maturity, they are olive-green with a contrasting orange-tinged, conical, blunt lid, and held on a straight seta about 2 mm long. The calyptra has a long, oblique beak, and the capsules are smooth when mature and old.

Similar species

G. donniana can be confused with the much less common *G. arenaria* (Smith, p. 441), *G. alpestris* (Smith, p. 438) and *G. sessitana* (*Field Bryology* 95, 16–20). However, the abundant, distinctive capsules suggest *G. donniana*. The rarer *G. longirostris* (p. 523) also frequently produces capsules, but has leaves with very smooth, rounded backs, and no hint of a keel. *G. trichophylla* (p. 529) rarely has capsules; they are furrowed when mature and held on a curved seta. Its moistened leaves spread out much more from the stem than those of *G. donniana*. See also *G. pulvinata* (p. 526), *G. montana* (p. 519), *Coscinodon cribrosus* (p. 505) and *Schistidium confertum* (p. 517).

Habitat

Characteristic of hard, montane, acidic outcrops of rock, including block scree and jumbles of slate. It is restricted to exposed situations and frequently found on rocks rich in heavy metals. At lower altitudes it occasionally occurs on drystone walls and on stony mine waste.

Photos David Holyoak (top left), Fred Rumsey (bottom left) & Nick Hodgetts (right) Text Ron Porley