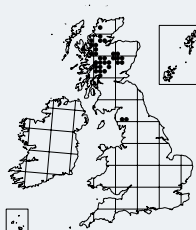


*Kiaeria starkei*

Starke's Fork-moss



**Identification** Grows as yellow-green cushions or patches which can be extensive and up to 6 cm tall. The leaves are 4–4.5 mm long, somewhat wavy when dry, erect or turned in one direction when moist, and narrowly spearhead-shaped with a long tip and an excurrent nerve. The cells at the basal corners of the leaf are usually visible with a hand lens, being large, brown and forming a distinct group. Capsules are fairly common, elliptical, slightly curved and have a swollen base (see drawing on p. 373).

**Similar species** A rather nondescript plant which resembles a small *Dicranum scoparium* (p. 378) or *D. fuscescens* (p. 382). *K. falcata* (p. 373), with which it often occurs, can be very similar, but the leaves of *K. falcata* are more regularly curved and they do not have distinct cells in the basal corners; however, some plants can be difficult to determine. *K. blyttii* (p. 374) is darker, has finer leaves and a different habitat. *K. glacialis* (p. 376) looks very similar and has the same habitat, but is normally about twice the size; however, microscopical confirmation may sometimes be necessary.

**Habitat** Grows on rocks and mineral soils in the mountains and is only frequent in areas where snow lies late in the year; in such places it may form patches covering several square metres.