

*Leptodictyum riparium**Amblystegium riparium*

Kneiff's Feather-moss

Key 293, 350



Identification The medium-sized, dingy green, irregularly branched shoots of this rather nondescript moss have stem leaves that are mostly 2–3 mm long, egg- to spearhead-shaped, widest just above the base and tapering evenly to the narrowly pointed tip. The nerve is long and single, and the leaf margins are entire. Basal cells are somewhat enlarged, but do not form distinct groups. Useful pointers are the widely spreading, often widely spaced leaves, and the shape of the leaf base, which is abruptly narrowed at the junction with the stem. The shoots often appear flattened, but they are variable and some forms have curved leaves. Branch leaves are similar to the stem leaves, but smaller. Capsules (about 2–2.5 mm long) are often present on a long, smooth seta 1.5–2.5 cm long.

Similar species Species of *Amblystegium* often grow in the same habitat, but most are smaller. *A. humile* (p. 704) is closest in size and appearance, but rarely as large as *L. riparium*, its stem leaves mostly being 1–2 mm long. Forms with curved leaves may resemble *Drepanocladus aduncus* (p. 714), but *D. aduncus* usually has a well-defined group of cells at the basal margins; these are visible with a hand lens if leaves are pulled from the stem. Some forms, however, need to be confirmed microscopically. *Brachythecium* species (pp. 741–752) are very variable and may resemble *L. riparium*, but most have finely toothed leaf margins. If capsules are present, they are shorter and fatter than in *L. riparium* and the seta is often roughened. *B. mildeanum* (p. 752) has almost entire leaf margins and a smooth seta, but is normally larger than *Leptodictyum* and has erect or weakly spreading, crowded leaves.

Habitat It occurs in wet places in the lowlands, usually on tree bases and roots, old branches and other debris in marshes, by ponds and sluggish streams and in wet woodland.