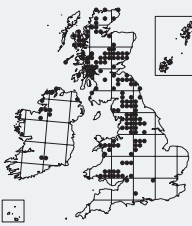


*Mnium marginatum*

Bordered Thyme-moss



## Identification

*M. marginatum* forms shoots 1.5 to several centimetres tall, growing in tufts that are often tinged red in the lower part. The egg-shaped leaves are 4–8 mm long, and at the base run distinctly and broadly down onto the stem. Long, narrow, toothed cells make up the border. In upper leaves, the nerve often reaches the leaf tip. The lower part of the stem bears smaller (3–4 mm long), but quite broad, scale-like leaves (see the two leaves at top right in the upper drawing). Capsules frequently form in early summer; they are 3–5 mm long, with a beaked lid.

## Similar species

*M. ambiguum* (*M. lycopodioides*) (Smith, p. 619), *M. spinosum* (Smith, p. 617) and *M. thomsonii* (Smith, p. 618) all closely resemble *M. marginatum*, but are much rarer, and best distinguished from *M. marginatum* and each other by microscopic features. However, the following subtle distinctions may offer clues to identity in the field. *M. ambiguum* and *M. spinosum* have rather more coarsely toothed leaves. *M. spinosum* also has leaf cells arranged in diagonal rows. *M. thomsonii* has smaller leaf cells, and may be a paler green. *M. marginatum* also forms capsules much more frequently than these other species. *M. hornum* (p. 612) is rarely tinged red, has a leaf base that only shortly and narrowly runs down onto the stem, a nerve that ends below the leaf tip in the upper leaves, narrowly triangular scale-like leaves on the lower part of the stem, and a capsule with a short lid.

## Habitat

*M. marginatum* favours damp, sheltered, lightly shaded, base-rich soil and shallow soil on rocky ledges and in crevices, for example on river banks and shady walls. It is mainly lowland, whereas *M. ambiguum*, *M. spinosum* and *M. thomsonii* occur mainly in the hills. *M. thomsonii* is the most widespread of these three upland species.