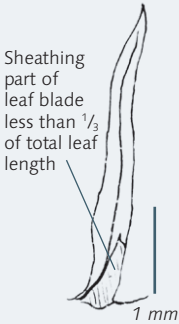
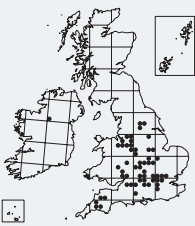


Octodiceras fontanum

Fissidens fontanus, *Octodiceras julianum*

Fountain Pocket-moss



Identification

O. fontanum is flaccid, with much-branched shoots up to 3 cm long. The shoots appear flattened, with long, narrow leaves in 2 rows on the stem. *O. fontanum* shares the very distinctive leaf structure of *Fissidens*, but the sheathing part of the leaf blade is less than a third the length of the whole leaf. Each leaf is up to 5 mm long and about 10 times as long as wide, with unborded margins (i.e. margins without cells much longer than wide). The narrow but distinct nerve ceases just below the leaf tip. The leaves are flaccid when moist, but become very fragile when dry. Capsules are unknown in Britain.

Similar species

This species is easy to recognize and its distinctive leaf structure and flattened shoots can only be confused with members of the genus *Fissidens*. There are several aquatic *Fissidens* species (pp. 404–417), but these usually have leaves bordered by cells much longer than wide, with a sheathing leaf blade more than one-third the length of the leaf (indeed it can be half the length). The leaves are also proportionally wider than those of *Octodiceras*.

Habitat

O. fontanum grows submerged in still and slow-moving water on a variety of substrates, including wood and stone. It can tolerate a little pollution and may be found in canals (in North America it occurs in estuaries). Although a scarce plant, it may form quite extensive colonies.