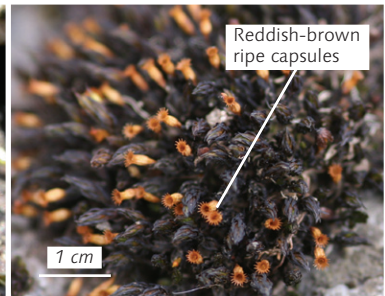
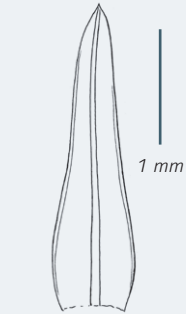
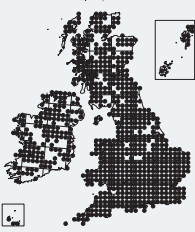


*Orthotrichum anomalum*

Anomalous Bristle-moss

Key 184, 218



## Identification

*O. anomalum* differs from most British members of the genus in growing on rocks or masonry rather than trees. The dark reddish-brown ripe capsules of *O. anomalum* are held well above low cushions of straight-leaved, green or brown shoots on a 2–4 mm long seta: a distinctive appearance not shared by other common mosses of the lowlands, except *Ulota* species that grow on trees and shrubs. Each capsule has 16 erect outer peristome teeth and strong ribs when it is dry. Mature capsules are reddish-brown, but light green when unripe. The calyptra is light brown and is sparsely hairy. Shoots are typically about 1.5 cm tall, with leaves 2.5–4 mm long, and capsules about 2 mm long.

## Similar species

The other *Orthotrichum* species of stone and rock, *O. cupulatum* (p. 657) and *O. rupestre* (p. 655), hide their capsules on a short seta among leaves. *O. pulchellum* (p. 652) has similarly long setae, but grows on trees and has its leaves slightly twisted when dry. *Ulota hutchinsiae* (p. 663) is largely restricted to upland Britain and has strongly hairy calyptrae. The sharply tipped leaves of *O. anomalum* quite often go white when old, making confusion with *Schistidium crassipilum* (p. 511) surprisingly easy, but dry capsules of *S. crassipilum* are not strongly furrowed.

## Habitat

More or less ubiquitous on concrete, gravestones, wall tops and other man made structures except in the most polluted parts of Britain. Also common on exposed limestone, but absent from chalk. It is not found on acidic rock. *O. anomalum* occasionally grows on trees and shrubs, which can be very muddling!