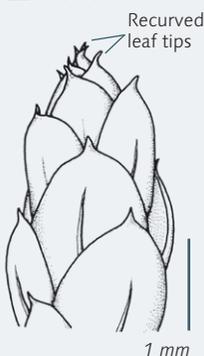


*Pseudoscleropodium purum**Scleropodium purum*

Neat Feather-moss

Key 355



## Identification

This is one of the easiest mosses to recognize in the field. It is a robust, green or yellow-green plant with more or less regularly pinnate shoots to 10 cm or more long, and relatively short branches (the shoots are therefore feather-like). The leaves are erect, loosely appressed and overlapping, only a little longer than wide, and deeply concave. This gives the typically 2 mm wide shoots a stout, fat appearance. The leaves are about 2 mm long, broadly rounded or broadly pointed, and their most distinctive feature is the presence of a small, recurved point at the tip. At the tip of the stem and new branches, the crowded points of the leaves protrude like a miniature crown (older branch tips may become more attenuated). The leaves have a single nerve. Branch leaves are similar to the stem leaves, but a little smaller. Capsules are rare.

## Similar species

*Pleurozium schreberi* (p. 815) is similar in size and appearance, but lacks the small, recurved point at the leaf tip, and has reddish stems. In short turf, compact forms of *P. purum* may grow with *Entodon concinnus* (p. 774) and *Calliergonella cuspidata* (p. 797), and may be confused with both of these. *P. purum* can almost always be distinguished by its protruding leaf tip and the presence of a single nerve. Both *Pleurozium schreberi* and *Entodon concinnus* lack a distinct nerve. *Scleropodium tourettii* (p. 755) has similar concave leaves, but they are broadly pointed and lack the small, recurved point of *P. purum*, and the plants are irregularly branched. *Cirriphyllum piliferum* (p. 756) has regularly pinnate branching like *P. purum*, but is easily distinguished by the long, hair-like point of the stem leaves.

## Habitat

*P. purum* occurs in a wide range of habitats, but especially in unimproved, acidic grassland and heaths, but also in chalk and limestone grassland, on banks, among rocks and on rock ledges. It may occur in open woodland, but not in deep shade.