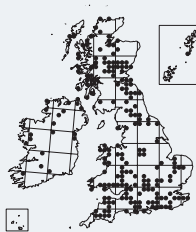


Rhodobryum roseum

Rose-moss

Key 169



Identification *R. roseum* has a distinctive rosette of large leaves (often 4.5–5 mm long, and sometimes more) at the end of secondary stems, which arise from a wiry, creeping primary stem. The terminal rosette of leaves consists of 18–22 of these large leaves and gives the impression of a small green rose, 10–12 mm across. These terminal leaves are widest above the middle and unbordered (i.e. the marginal cells are no longer than wide). The margins are recurved to about halfway up the leaf, and the margins are finely toothed towards the leaf tip, where there is a short abrupt point. The nerve extends to the leaf tip and may just protrude. The leaves on the primary stem are small and scale-like, and the lower leaves on the secondary stems are also small. Capsules are very rare in Britain.

Similar species *R. roseum* is quite distinct, although related mosses (e.g. *Plagiomnium undulatum*, p. 618) may also have a terminal rosette of large, translucent leaves surrounding the sexual organs. However, the leaves of these other species lack the shape and characteristics of the leaves of *Rhodobryum*.

Habitat This moss usually occurs as scattered stems in short grassland in open woodland, heaths, sand dunes and chalk grassland. A favoured habitat is on and around the large nests of yellow ants. It is also occurs on grassy rock ledges in hilly districts. *R. roseum* may occasionally form almost pure swards on the impoverished sandy soils of the Breckland.