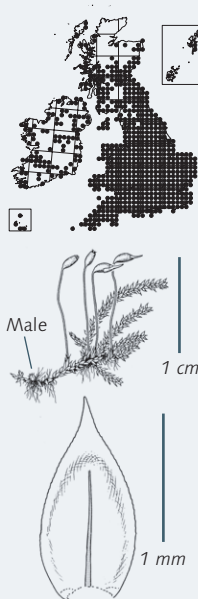


*Rhynchostegium confertum*

Clustered Feather-moss

Key 368



## Identification

This very common moss forms mid-green patches on wood and stones. It is irregularly branched, with prostrate, ascending or curved branches. Branch and stem leaves are similar, 1–1.5 mm long, egg-shaped or narrowly egg-shaped, tapering to a slender point. They are moderately concave and sometimes slightly curved to the side. When dry, they are not or only slightly shrunken, and not at all twisted. The leaves have a single nerve and very finely toothed margins. Capsules are common and often plentiful. These are curved, egg-shaped or oblong, with a beaked lid, and borne on a rather short (6–10 mm long), erect, smooth seta.

## Similar species

*R. murale* (p. 760) normally has concave leaves and cylindrical shoots, with branches often blunt at the tip. *R. megapolitanum* (p. 762) has a loosely branched growth form and is not closely attached to the substrate. It also differs in the shape of the stem leaves, which are broadly egg-shaped in the lower part and have a slender, tapering tip. The very rare *R. rotundifolium* (p. 763) has broader leaves which become shrunken and twisted when dry. *Brachythecium velutinum* (p. 745) differs in its narrowly triangular and hardly concave leaves, and capsules that have a roughened seta and conical lid. Slender forms of *Hygrohypnum luridum* (p. 731), especially on damp stonework, have leaves that are usually more strongly curved, with a broader tip, and its capsules are curved and elliptical. The rare *Sematophyllum substrumulosum* (p. 794) has similar capsules, but with an even longer beak to the lid, and has nerveless leaves with a long, tapering tip.

## Habitat

*R. confertum* is common on both wood and stones. It is characteristic on living trees in the lowlands, particularly old elders (*Sambucus nigra*), but it also occurs on roots, stumps and logs. It also frequents stones, rocks, walls and other man-made structures that are not too acidic. It is usually found in light to moderate shade, in woodland, churchyards, waysides, gardens and similar places.