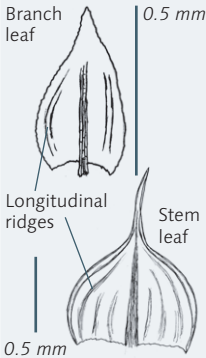
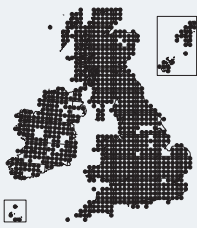


*Thuidium tamariscinum*

Common Tamarisk-moss

Key 336



## Identification

The bright, yellowish-green or dark green shoots of *T. tamariscinum* are amongst the most distinctive of our pleurocarps. They are usually tripinnately branched, 5–25 cm long, and form loose mats. The green or red-brown stems are covered with a felt of tiny, branched filaments and very broad, heart-shaped or triangular, opaque, longitudinally ridged, acute-tipped leaves, about 1.25 mm long. The nerve is wide and almost reaches the leaf tip. Branch leaves are narrower and shorter (up to 0.5 mm). The branches are arranged more or less in one plane and become shorter towards the end of the shoot. Capsules are uncommon, and form in autumn and winter. They are large and curved, and held on a long (2–4 cm), purple-red seta.

## Similar species

*T. delicatum* and *T. assimile* (p. 697) look like delicate, less-branched, compact forms of *T. tamariscinum*, with denser, slenderer branches. However, both may occasionally grow as large as *T. tamariscinum*, and these large forms can only be distinguished microscopically. *T. delicatum* often occurs in more base-enriched places than *T. tamariscinum*, for example in flushes and on damp rocks and ledges. *T. assimile* grows on soil over chalk and limestone. *Abietinella abietina* (p. 695) is once-pinnate and grows on calcareous soil. *Hylocomium splendens* (p. 821) resembles *T. tamariscinum* in general form, but has a consistently red (rather than green) stem. Its leaves provide the most constant diagnostic feature as they are broader and much more translucent than those of *T. tamariscinum* and have a weak double nerve. The leaves of *Kindbergia praelonga* (p. 767) are not longitudinally ridged, and its stems lack tiny, branched filaments.

## Habitat

Grows on soil in woodland, in hedge banks on clay and amongst grass in damp places. It is more typical of neutral conditions than of strongly calcareous or strongly acidic sites.