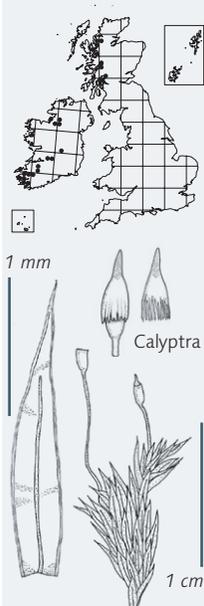


Daltonia splachnoides

Irish Daltonia



Identification

The shiny, usually dark green, flattened, erect shoots of this small, rare moss form tufts up to 1 cm tall. When moist, the leaves grow away from the stem at an angle of up to 45°; when dry, they become appressed. The leaves are keeled, with a prominent nerve that ceases well below the tip. They are about 2 mm long and 0.25 mm wide, sharply pointed at the tip, and have a yellowish border composed of several rows of elongated cells. Erect, oval-oblong, roughened capsules, about 1 mm long, frequently form in summer and autumn. They have a long-beaked, yellowish lid, and the base of the calyptra has a long, strong fringe. The capsules are about 1 mm long, borne on a deep red, roughened seta about 6 mm tall.

Similar species

The capsules of *D. splachnoides* look somewhat like those of *Ulota* species (pp. 658–664), which often grow on the same twigs as *Daltonia*. The conical, unsplit calyptrae have splayed margins; these, combined with the flattened shoots are unique to *D. splachnoides*.

Habitat

D. splachnoides favours very humid sites in districts of high rainfall, and often grows where it can be regularly splashed with or inundated by running water. It grows on the twigs, branches, trunks and roots of trees and bushes, as well as humus and rotting logs, and occasionally on damp, shaded rocks. *D. splachnoides* is undoubtedly rare, but may be overlooked because individual colonies are often tiny in extent as well as small in stature, and may not persist for long periods. *D. splachnoides* is now known to be fairly frequent on willows by streams in conifer plantations in south-west Ireland.