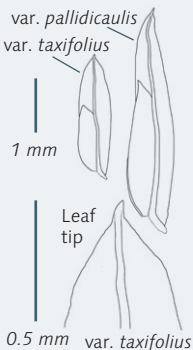
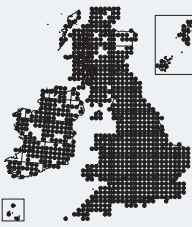


Fissidens taxifolius var. *taxifolius*/ var. *pallidicaulis*

Common/Great Pocket-moss

Key 101



Identification *F. taxifolius* is a medium-sized species, with shoots up to 2 cm long. The leaves lack a border, and the nerve runs right to the tip of the leaf, where it is usually excurrent as a short point. Under a microscope the leaf margins are regularly and finely toothed, but this is scarcely detectable in the field. Capsules are fairly frequent, inclined, and the red seta arises from near the base of the main shoot. *Var. taxifolius* has more or less parallel-sided leaves which taper abruptly to an acute and often abruptly pointed tip; *var. pallidicaulis* has more elongated leaves which taper in the upper part, and the shoots are often longer than in the *var. taxifolius*, reaching 2–3 cm as against 1–2 cm. For anyone familiar with *F. taxifolius* as a species of soil banks, the long shoots of *var. pallidicaulis* found beside rocky streams seem very distinctive, but otherwise the two varieties differ very little in either their features or habitat in Britain.

Similar species *F. celticus* (p. 412) and *F. exilis* (p. 411) have unbordered leaves, but are very small species. *F. osmundoides* (p. 414) has the nerve disappearing in or below the leaf tip. *F. adianthoides* and *F. dubius* (p. 416) have leaves with a pellucid marginal band, and the toothed margins are detectable with a 20 hand lens. *F. incurvus* (p. 406) also has inclined capsules, but its leaves have a pale border.

Habitat *Var. taxifolius* is common on soil or in cracks and crevices in rock, in woodland, on shady banks, in arable fields and undisturbed garden borders. *Var. pallidicaulis* grows in rock crevices or occasionally on soil on rocky stream banks in the north-west.