Hygrohypnum smithii
Arctic Brook-moss

This rare but distinctive moss of mountain streams has rigid stems, typically several centimetres long, often denuded at the base and irregularly branched, forming yellowish-green or brownish patches. The leaves are distinctively circular to very broadly egg-shaped, only slightly longer than wide (1.25 mm long and 1 mm wide), and with a rounded or broadly pointed tip. They spread widely when moist, and do not curve. The other important character is the presence of a well-developed single nerve reaching about halfway up the leaf. Capsules are rare.

The combination of almost circular leaves, a single nerve and aquatic habitat distinguishes this species from other pleurocarps. H. duriusculum (p. 732) differs in the shorter, double nerve and often slightly curved leaves.

Known only from mountain streams in a few localities at high altitudes (700 m or more) in Scotland.

Identification

Similar species

Habitat

Photo Michael Lüth Text Tom Blockeel