Pohlia lutescens
Yellow Thread-moss

Identification

P. lutescens is a subtle species, but once known it is found widely, being recognized by its small size and pale colour. Its shoots are small (3–8 mm tall), with glossy, pale yellow-green leaves 2–3 mm long. P. lutescens may grow as scattered shoots (or occasionally as patches) among other bryophytes, such as Dicranella heteromalla (p. 371), Calypogeia arguta (p. 90) or Diplophyllum albicans (p. 166). Capsules are not known in Britain.

Similar species

P. lescuriana (Smith, p. 611) is less yellowish and is not glossy, but is most reliably distinguished from P. lutescens by microscopical examination of the rhizoidal tubers, which are knobbly in P. lutescens and smooth in P. lescuriana. P. melanodon (p. 610) has wider upper leaves, but can sometimes only be reliably distinguished from P. lutescens and P. lescuriana by examining the tubers. Tuberous Bryum species (see B. rubens, p. 598) normally have taller and wider shoots, with leaves wider relative to their length, and a nerve which does not end below the leaf tip.

Habitat

This is mainly a moss of bare soil in open conditions in the lowlands – by paths, in hedge banks, ditches and on streamsides. It is easy to overlook, being small and often occurring as scattered shoots.