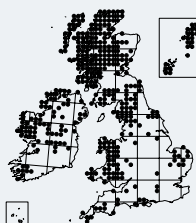


*Scorpidium scorpioides*

Hooked Scorpium-moss

Key 309, 318



**Identification** The fat, pale-tipped, red-brown shoots of *S. scorpioides* make it one of our most recognizable upland mosses. Shoots typically grow to 10–15 cm long and 4–5 mm wide. Leaves are about 2–3 mm long and up to 2 mm wide. A closer look will show that the leaves are wide, shortly tapering and almost nerveless (the nerves are usually very short and double, but are rarely single, and reach mid-leaf). Capsules are rare.

**Similar species** Two species of *Pseudocalliergon* are similar in size: *P. lycopodioides* (p. 726) has a nerve reaching the leaf tip, whilst the very rare *P. turgescens* (Smith, p. 795) has straight leaves with short, single or double nerves. Also, both these *Pseudocalliergon* species lack the red tones of *S. scorpioides*. *S. revolvens* (p. 723) may grow with *S. scorpioides* as sprawling patches in upland flushes, but its leaves are narrower, more strongly curved, and have strong nerves. *Hygrohypnum eugyrium* (p. 734) has similarly dark shoots with a pale tip and nerveless leaves, but it is less than one-third the size of *S. scorpioides* and grows in gorges or mountain streams.

**Habitat** One of the dominant species in mineral-rich flushes in upland Britain, as well as locally abundant beneath sedges (*Carex* species) and bog-rush (*Schoenus*) in low-lying, calcareous fens, dune slacks or coastal flushes. Less often, it grows on flushed rocks and cliff ledges in the uplands. In upland flushes it is worth looking among *S. scorpioides* for scattered stems of *Pseudocalliergon trifarium* or *Sphagnum platyphyllum*.