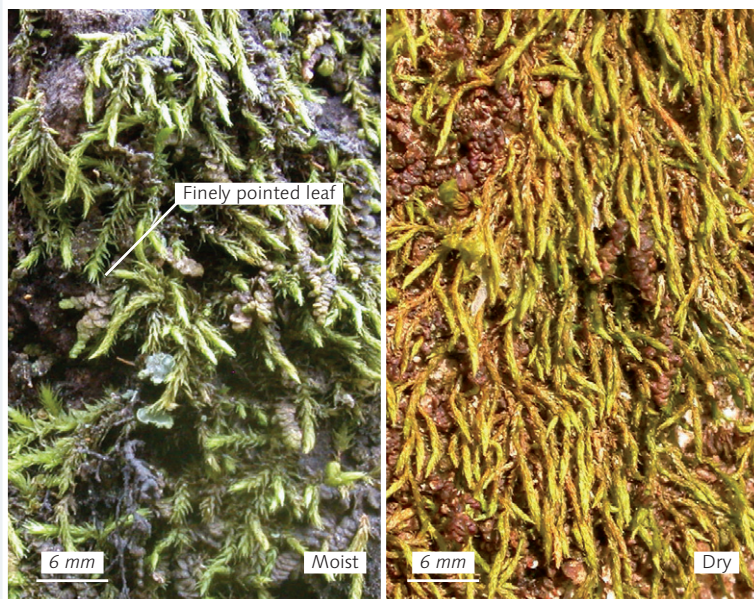
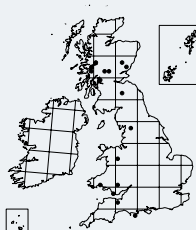


Habrodon perpusillus

Lesser Squirrel-tail Moss



Identification When dry, the very slender shoots of *H. perpusillus* are string-like, as the tiny leaves are tightly appressed to the stems and overlap their neighbours. The leaves are just over 1 mm long, lack a nerve and taper gradually to a rather long, finely pointed, and rather wispy tip, which is less tightly appressed than the rest of the leaf. On moistening, the leaves spread out and the plant becomes less distinctive. Capsules are very rare (reproduction is by gemmae, but these are too small to be seen in the field).

Similar species The widespread and abundant *Amblystegium serpens* (p. 702) has a similar leaf shape, but its leaves are less tightly appressed to the stem when dry, and have an obvious nerve. *A. confervoides* (p. 705) and *Platydictya jungermannioides* (p. 778) lack a nerve, but they are even smaller than *H. perpusillus*, with leaves less than 0.5 mm long, and they grow on rocks or soil rather than bark.

Habitat This rarity grows on the bark of mature trees such as ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), elm (*Ulmus*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). It is usually found in well-lit situations, occurring on isolated trees in grassland and parkland or on trees at the edges of woods.