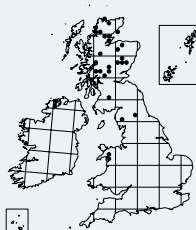


# *Schistidium agassizii*

Water Grimmia



**Identification** This is the rarest of the aquatic *Schistidium* species that lack hair points. It grows as cushions or lax tufts similar to *S. rivulare*, with shoots 1.5–5 cm long, but often has a brown tinge that is not typical of *S. rivulare*. The leaves, including those surrounding the capsule, are long (1.75–2.5 mm), broad and parallel-sided (tongue-shaped) with plane margins. The youngest leaves, near the shoot tip, stick up straight in a spiky way that is unique in British *Schistidium* species. The leaves surrounding the capsules do not fully sheath them. The capsules become characteristically wide-mouthed when dry.

**Similar species** Neither *S. rivulare* (p. 507) nor *S. platyphyllum* (p. 508) has plane leaf margins or tongue-shaped leaves, and neither has the dry capsules shrinking near the base to give a wide-mouthed appearance. The leaf shape is superficially similar to that of *Racomitrium aquaticum* (p. 535), but that has very opaque-looking leaves thanks to its very narrow cells, and *S. agassizii* nearly always has its distinctive capsules present.

**Habitat** There are rather few British records, and they come from a wide range of habitats. *S. agassizii* is both scarce and somewhat overlooked. It has been recorded from rocks in acidic, lowland rivers in Scotland, from acidic, upland streams in north Wales, more calcareous streams in Teesdale, flushed igneous outcrops in a valley in the Galloway Hills and seasonally flooded hollows in mica-schist rocks on Ben Lawers.