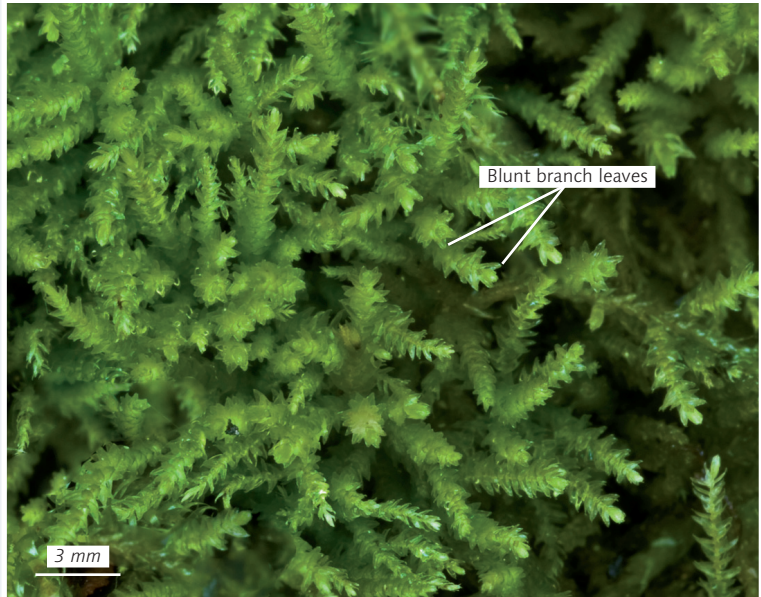
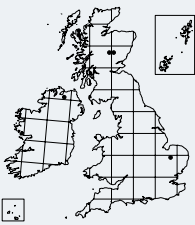


*Eurhynchium pulchellum**Eurhynchiastrum pulchellum*

Elegant Feather-moss



Identification

Though very rare in Britain and Ireland, *E. pulchellum* is rather distinctive. It is small and prostrate, with short, crowded branches. The branches are more or less rounded at the tip, not tapered as in many pleurocarps. Stem and branch leaves differ markedly in shape. Stem leaves are larger, though rarely more than 1 mm long. They are broadly egg-shaped, often almost triangular, and with a shortly tapering point. Branch leaves are smaller, egg-shaped and broadly pointed or frequently blunt at the tip. All the leaves are often a little pleated or wrinkled, but this is difficult to see in the field because of their small size. They have a single nerve. Capsules have not been found in Britain and Ireland.

Similar species

Though it might be overlooked through unfamiliarity, *E. pulchellum* is distinctive because of its stubby branches and differently shaped leaves on the stem and branches. The blunt tip of the branch leaves is a particularly good character, though sometimes it is more or less pointed. Compact forms of *Kindbergia praelonga* (p. 767) do not have stubby branches or blunt branch leaves. *Heterocladium dimorphum* (Smith, p. 734), which is almost as rare as *E. pulchellum*, is similar in size and also has strongly differentiated stem and branch leaves. It differs in its short, double nerve, the branches are neatly cylindrical with a wiry appearance, and the stem leaves (or at least some of them) tend to bend backwards and down.

Habitat

E. pulchellum occurs in a few places in Scotland and Ulster on dry, base-rich mountain rocks, especially basalt. In the Breckland of Suffolk it has been recorded in a very different habitat, on open, calcareous soil.