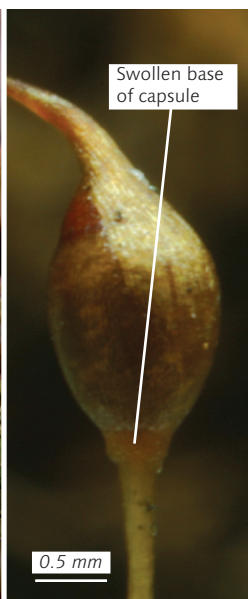
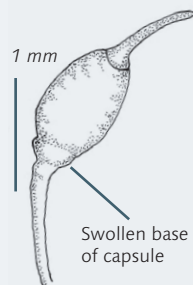
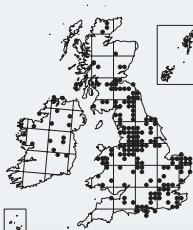


Dicranella cerviculata

Red-neck Forklet-moss

**Identification**

Fruiting plants that look like small (0.5–2 cm tall) *D. heteromalla* should be checked for this species, which shares the approximately 2.5–3 mm long, narrow, curved leaves and yellow setae of that very common acid-loving moss. The difference between them lies in the capsule, which has a prominent swelling (like a man's well-developed Adam's apple) where it joins the seta. The relatively restricted habitat preferences of *D. cerviculata* mean that carefully checking many populations of *D. heteromalla* is unnecessary.

Similar species

D. heteromalla (p. 371) never has a swollen base to the capsule, and is usually a slightly larger plant (10–20 mm vs 8–15 mm). *D. heteromalla* also has a slightly longer capsule than *D. cerviculata*. The much shorter-leaved *Ceratodon purpureus* (p. 354) also has a swollen base to the capsule, as do a few uncommon, montane mosses, including the tuft-forming *Kiaeria* species (pp. 373–376) and the yellow-green *Oncophorus* species (p. 360). None of these montane species are likely to grow in similar places to *D. cerviculata*. Identifying non-fruiting *D. cerviculata* requires microscopical examination.

Habitat

The most characteristic habitat of *D. cerviculata* is said to be fresh peat cuttings, although regular checking of cuttings in southern Wales produces far more *D. heteromalla*. The cessation of hand cutting of peat may have caused *D. cerviculata* to decline. Fortunately, it can grow on a few other substrates, including damp, acidic gravel and sand, crumbling acidic shale, flushed colliery spoil and the edges of peaty tracks and pools. Unlike *D. heteromalla*, it is restricted to open habitats.