

Mosses for starters – spotters' sheet

Mosses often seem very similar until you look closely. These are 5 common mosses, from different habitats, with distinctive features to help identification. Why not try to spot some at St. Fagan's National History Museum?

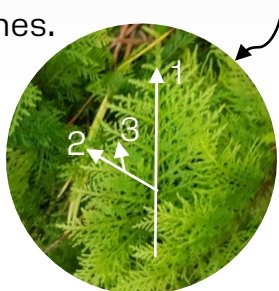
Find more nature guides or get in touch with our museum scientists for help with identification: museum.wales/collections/on-your-doorstep



Common Tamarisk-moss *Thuidium tamariscinum*

A beautiful, large, springy moss found carpeting the ground in woodland, especially amongst conifers.

It looks almost fern-like with branches that curve over and are divided 3 times.



Silky Wall Feather-moss

Homalothecium sericeum

Find it on walls and tree branches but never on the ground. Look for single creeping branches that reach out like fingers while keeping close to the wall (see above).

When dry, it can look very different. The leaf tips become shiny and the branches curl in on themselves. But it will still have the finger-like branches.

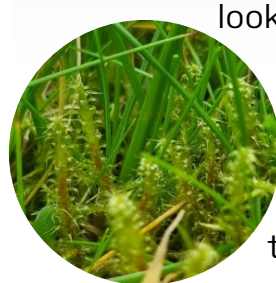


Springy Turf Moss

Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus

A common moss in lawns, where no chemicals have been added.

Shoots grow upright, with bright green leaves bending backwards towards orange stems. The bent-back leaves stick out and make the moss



look spiky, giving it its other name, Electrified Cat's-tail Moss!

Lateral Cryphaea

Cryphaea heteromalla

This moss only grows on trees in areas with good air quality.

Shoots with capsules stick out from the tree, so that spores can catch the wind.



Capsules with orange tips form a row on one side of the shoot.

Capillary Thread-moss

Bryum capillare

Find it on walls. Capsules hang down, nodding like a snowdrop flower, with red stems. Water droplets accumulate on them in the rain or morning dew.

Shoots are short, tightly clustered and form cushions. Leaves have a short white hair point, and twist up like a corkscrew when dry.