

Wessex Ecological Consultancy

28 Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8HL

Tel: 0117 9441034

Email: dawn or rupert@wessexeco.co.uk

Web: wessexeco.co.uk



TROOPERS HILL BRYOPHYTES

Bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) were recorded at Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve on 10th December 2021, with some additions made in the following winter. Only species growing on the ground and small rocks were recorded; there are doubtless other species growing on trees but no attempt was made to record these.

Most of the species listed below belong to one of two ecological communities on the hill.

The first is the extensive and, in winter at least, conspicuous community of pleurocarp mosses growing under heath, often accompanied by *Cladonia* lichens. The most important members of this community are *Hypnum cupressiforme* var *cupressiforme*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Polytrichum piluliferum*, *Polytrichum juniperum* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum*. Thinner soils in these areas support a mixed community of acrocarps, which include *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Campylopus introflexus* (an introduced species), *Campylopus flexuosus* and *Campylopus pyriformis*.

The second community grows on sparsely vegetated soil, most frequently on steep banks. Where soils are deep and nutrient-rich this community is dominated by widespread species such as *Bryum capillare*, *Fissidens bryoides* and *Fissidens taxifolius*. Where soils are thinner and more acidic small acrocarps such as *Pleuroidium acuminatum*, *Tortula truncata*, *Weissia controversa*, *Pohlia melanodon* and *Ceratodon purpureus* are dominant. On north-west facing banks around the gully the tiny liverwort *Cephaloziella divaricata* is locally frequent and banks by the path to the south of the gully have the *Cephaloziella* and three more liverworts: *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Cephalozia bicupsidata* and *Solenostoma gracillimum* (formerly *Jungermannia gracillima*). These and other small, inconspicuous species are probably widespread on steep banks elsewhere in and around the gully.

Many of the species recorded are restricted to acidic soils and are therefore uncommon in the Bristol region; these are doubtless the best examples locally of moss communities dominated by species such as *Polytrichum juniperum*. The closest areas where these communities are well developed are the Mendips and the Forest of Dean, although there are fragmented examples around Pensford and Midsomer Norton, in Leigh Woods and on the fringes of the Gordano Valley.

Several of the species recorded appear to be very rare locally: these include the mosses *Weissia controversa*, *Campylopus pyriformis*, *Campylopus flexuosus*, *Pleuridium acuminatum*, *Polytrichum commune* and *Polytrichum juniperum* and the liverworts *Cephaloziella divaricate*, *Diplophyllum albicans* and *Solenostoma gracillimum*.

It is highly likely that further survey could add significantly to this species list.

Rupert Higgins

Mosses

Amblystegium serpens	Creeping feather-moss
Barbula unguiculata	Bird's-claw beard-moss
Brachythecium albicans	Whitish feather-moss
Brachythecium rutabulum	Rough-stalked feather-moss
Bryum argenteum	Silver-moss
Bryum capillare	Capillary thread-moss
Bryum dichotomum	Bicoloured bryum
Campylopus flexuosus	Rusty swan-neck moss
Campylopus introflexus	Heath star-moss
Campylopus pyriformis	Dwarf swan-neck moss
Ceratodon purpureus	Redshanks
(Cryphaea heteromalla)	Lateral cryphaea
Dicranella heteromalla	Silky forklet-moss
Dicranoweisia cirrata	Common pincushion
Dicranum scoparium	Broom fork-moss
Didymodon fallax	False beard-moss
Didymodon insulanus	Cylindric beard-moss
Fissidens bryoides	Lesser pocket-moss
Fissidens taxifolius	Common pocket-moss
Grimmia pulvinata	Grey-cushioned grimmia
Homalothecium sericeum	Silky wall feather-moss
Hypnum cupressiforme var cupressiforme	Cypress-leaved plait-moss
Hypnum jutlandicum	Heath plait-moss
Kindbergia praelonga	Common feather-moss
(Lewinskia affinis)	Wood bristle-moss
Pleuridium acuminatum	Taper-leaved earth-moss
Pohlia melanodon	Pink-fruited thread-moss
Polytrichum commune	Common haircap
Polytrichum juniperum	Juniper haircap
Polytrichum piliferum	Bristly haircap
Pseudoscleropodium purum	Neat feather-moss
Rhynchostegium confertum	Clustered feather-moss
Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus	Springy turf-moss
(Syntrichia laevipilis)	Small hairy screw-moss
Tortula muralis	Wall screw-moss
Tortula truncata	Common pottia

Weissia controversa

Green-tufted stubble-moss

Liverworts

Cephalozia bicupsidata

Two-horned pincer-wort

Cephaloziella divaricata

Common threadwort

Diplophyllum albicans

White earwort

(Frullania dilatata)

Dilated scalewort

Lophocolea heterophylla

Variable-leaved crestwort

(Metzgeria furcata)

Forked veilwort

(Radula complanata)

Even scalewort

Solenostoma gracillimum

Crenulated flapwort

Bracketed species were recorded only on trees in the upper field.



Polytrichum juniperum



Pleuridium acuminatum