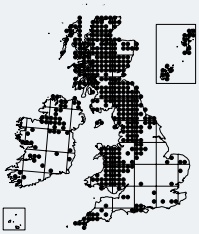
Sanionia uncinata

Drepanocladus uncinatus

Sickle-leaved Hook-moss

Key 300



Identification *S. uncinata* superficially resembles species of *Drepanocladus* and *Warnstorfia* whose leaves point in one direction, but its pale green shoots and very narrow, pleated, strongly curved (forming complete loops) leaves distinguish it from these species. It generally grows upright, with a regularly pinnate branching pattern, but this is often obscured by branches growing over one another, forming untidy patches. Shoots are 3.5–10 cm long, with leaves about 3 mm long. When growing on trees and shrubs *S. uncinata* sprawls or hangs in wefts. It often produces capsules (2.5 mm long).

Similar species Of other pleurocarps with leaves that all point in one direction, only *S. orthothecioides* (p. 729) has such narrow leaves, and few pleurocarps have the leaf tip positioned so that the leaves form complete loops. *S. orthothecioides* is more sparsely and irregularly branched, forms loose patches, has more obviously pleated leaves, and produces capsules extremely rarely. Very occasionally *S. uncinata* and *S. orthothecioides* grow together in turf on cliff tops in northern Scotland. *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (p. 724) has pleated leaves, but they do not form loops. The leaves of *Warnstorfia exannulata* (p. 716) may appear to be pleated, but are not. *W. exannulata* differs in its shorter leaves that less obviously point in one direction, and is often tinted orange or red. Colonies on trees and shrubs can easily be overlooked as *Hypnum* species (pp. 802–810), but the leaves of *S. uncinata* are far longer than those of *Hypnum* species, and they have pleats and a long nerve, which *Hypnum* species do not.

Habitat *S. uncinata* has catholic tastes in habitat, including gravelly stream edges, ledges on montane cliffs, boulder tops and mossy turf. Although it is sometimes found on top of rocks in flushes, it is not a typical species of flushes, unlike *W. exannulata*. In lowland England it is scarce on bark, especially willows in wet woodland. *S. uncinata* tends to favour drier habitats than *Drepanocladus* and *Warnstorfia* species.

Photos Sam Bosanquet (left) & Fred Rumsey (right) Text Sam Bosanquet