

# *Amblystegium varium*

Willow Feather-moss

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## Identification

Though similar to *A. serpens*, it is usually a little larger and tends not to form the dense intricate patches of thread-like shoots that are often seen in the latter. It is irregularly and often loosely branched and the stem leaves reach 1 mm or more in length. As in *A. serpens* the leaves are ovate-lanceolate with an acuminate apex, but they are typically wide-spreading in *A. varium*. The most important character is the long leaf nerve, which reaches almost to the leaf apex and can be seen with a lens on well developed shoots.

## Similar species

The larger forms approach *A. humile* (q.v.), and sometimes microscopic examination is needed to confirm the length of the nerve. It could be mistaken for *Cratoneuron filicinum* (q.v.), though the latter is generally a more rigid, closely branched moss and has distinct auricles at the leaf base. *A. radiale* (Smith, p. 767) has decurrent leaf bases which can usually be detected with a lens on the main stems.

## Habitat

It is usually found in wet or marshy ground, including carr woodland, and also by streams and ponds, on decaying vegetation, wood, stones and soil.