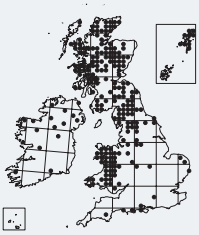
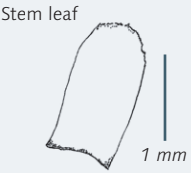
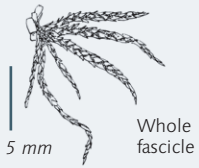
Sphagnum teres

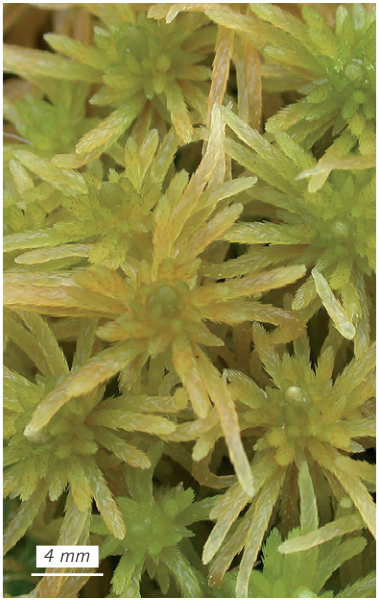
Rigid Bog-moss

Section Squarrosa









Identification

A medium-sized species. Green with a ginger tint, to ginger-brown, then usually with a contrasting large green terminal bud and centre of the capitulum; or entirely green in shaded, wet habitats. Terminal bud is prominent and stands well above the capitulum when viewed from the side. Usually 3 spreading branches per fascicle, though sometimes only 2. In the typical form, the branches form a tangled mass, obscuring the stem, giving individual plants an untidy look when viewed from the side. The stem is dark brown, or green in forms with all-green leaves. The stem leaf is rectangular, parallel-sided and broad across the slightly tattered and fringed tip. The tip of branch leaves is not (or only very slightly) recurved, though more obviously so in green forms growing in shade, especially on the lower branches. Capsules are rare.

Similar species

The common ginger form is easily recognized, even from a distance. However, all-green forms, which tend to be slightly etiolated and with slightly recurved branch leaves, resemble weak forms of *S. squarrosum* (p. 281). Distinguishing these can be problematic (see under *S. squarrosum*), and the best solution is to look in the vicinity for more typical specimens of one or both species. Green forms are also similar to *S. girgensohnii* (p. 284), but that species has stem leaves which are upright and appressed to the stem. In contrast the stem leaves of *S. teres* are weak and floppy, and are often side-on to the stem. Additionally, in *S. girgensohnii*, the cells in the central basal area of the stem leaves are enlarged and distorted, appearing as a pale patch when viewed against the light – though this is only just visible in the field with a 20 hand lens.

Habitat

Found in moderately base-rich flushes, often intimately associated with *S. warnstorfii* and/or *S. contortum*. Typically in small stands, in a narrow band alongside a flush.

Photos David Holyoak (left) & Andy Amphlett (right) Drawings Sharon Pilkington
Text Andy Amphlett & Sandy Payne