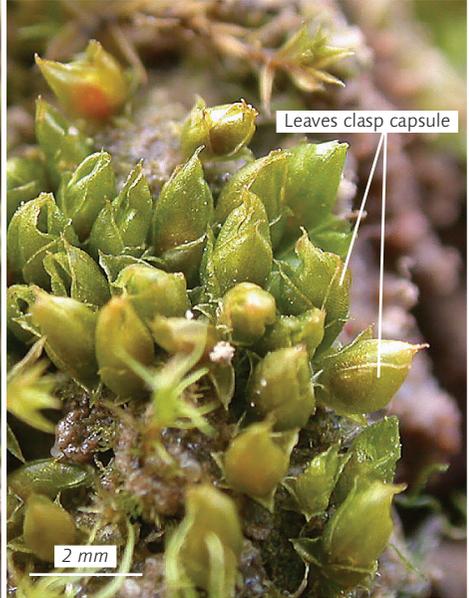
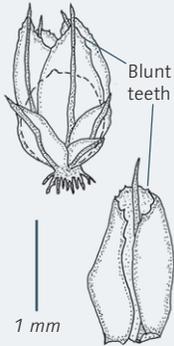
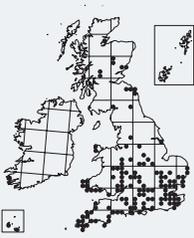


Acaulon muticum

Rounded Pygmy-moss



Identification Plants often look brown, are 1–2 mm tall, and seem to consist of a few concave upper leaves (up to 2 mm long) which clasp a capsule that is almost completely hidden amongst them. These upper leaves have plane margins that are bluntly toothed towards the rounded tip, and a nerve that is usually shortly excurrent. The lower leaves are much smaller than the upper leaves. The spherical capsules are common in winter, and borne on a seta that is little more than 0.1 mm long. *A. muticum* var. *mediterraneum* (*A. mediterraneum*) (Smith, p. 296) differs only in its spores.

Similar species *A. triquetrum* (Smith, p. 378) is a very rare moss of bare, chalky soil on banks and cliffs on the south coast of England. It is even smaller (up to 1.5 mm tall). Its leaves hardly overlap each other, have a recurved, excurrent nerve, and are keeled, so that plants look more or less triangular when viewed from above, whereas *A. muticum* looks more rounded. *A. triquetrum* also has a curved seta (not straight, as in *A. muticum*), so that the capsules are inclined to one side rather than held erect. The leaves of *Phascum cuspidatum* (p. 486) do not clasp the capsule as closely as those of *A. muticum*, have a more acute tip and are not bluntly toothed. *Microbryum curvicolle* (p. 489) holds its capsules just clear of the leaves on a strongly curved seta. *Weissia longifolia* (p. 427) has longer, narrower leaves. Its bud-like form makes *A. muticum* look like a young *Bryum* (pp. 581–599) at first glance.

Habitat *A. muticum* grows on bare, base-deficient, well-drained soil in arable fields, gravel pits, by tracks and paths, on banks and on anthills.