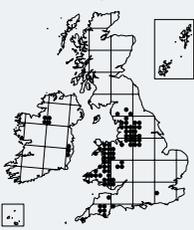


Atrichum crispum

Fountain Smoothcap



Identification

The obscure ridges of tissue on the nerve and relatively short, broad leaves make *A. crispum* look rather different from other *Atrichum* species. It forms pale to dull, olive-green tufts or patches, with individual shoots up to 7 cm tall, but generally about half this height. The leaves are held away from the stem, 4–6 mm long, distinctly narrowed at the base and scarcely undulate when moist; they become crisped when dry. The margins have single (very rarely paired) teeth more or less from the base to the acute tip, but unlike other *Atrichum* species, the underside of the leaf is tooth-free. The nerve has 1–3 low and obscure ridges of tissue on its upper side. Capsules are unknown in Britain, where only male plants occur. Propagation and dispersal is by spherical, light brown, rhizoidal gemmae up to 0.3 mm in diameter.

Similar species

Although *A. crispum* is most likely to be mistaken for another *Atrichum* species, confusion with a *Mnium* species (pp. 612–614) is also possible because the ridges of tissue are rather obscure and are sometimes difficult to make out in the field. Exceptionally, the ridges of tissue may be completely absent, and then *A. crispum* could be mistaken for *Funaria hygrometrica* (p. 561) or a *Bryum* (pp. 581–599), as well as *Mnium*. Its waterside habitat, rhizoidal gemmae and low ridges of tissue distinguish it from *Mnium* species, whilst it differs from other *Atrichum* species in the absence of any teeth on the back of the leaf, the broader leaf shape with a more distinctly narrowed insertion, and the poor development of ridges of tissue over the nerve.

Habitat

Usually closely associated with waterside habitats, *A. crispum* grows on rocky stream banks, gravelly and peaty substrates on lake shores, reservoirs and by rivers, and in damp ditches. It is restricted to acidic substrates and is most frequent on upland moors.