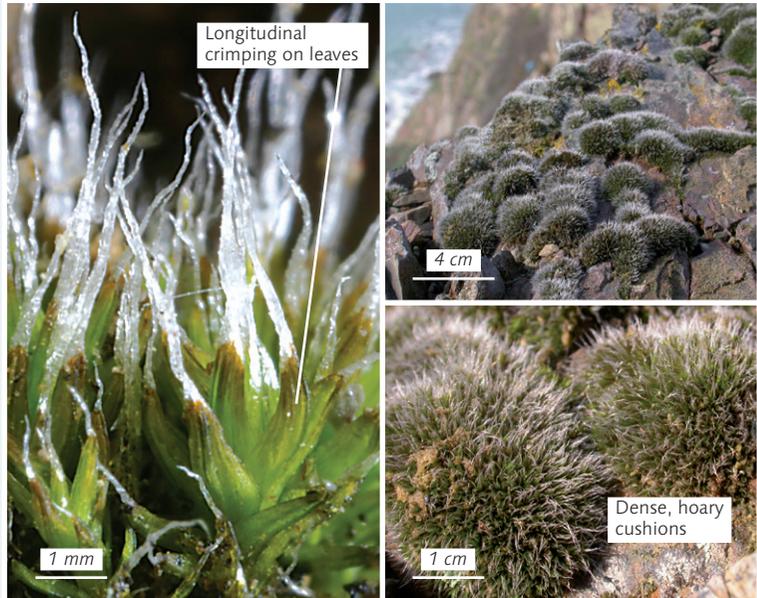
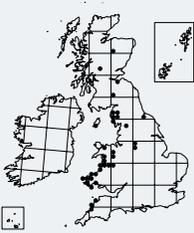


*Coscinodon cribrus*

Sieve-tooth Moss



**Identification** Once the characteristically friable habitat of *C. cribrus* has been learnt it can be found quite easily on western British coasts. It grows in small (up to 1 cm tall), dense, hoary tufts with very long hair points and looks much like a compact *Grimmia*. Leaves are 3–4 mm long. With a hand lens the characteristic features – incurved margins near the leaf base and longitudinal crimping near the leaf tip – can be seen. The calyptrae are large, loose-fitting and pale; the capsules otherwise look like those of *Schistidium*. Capsules are rare.

**Similar species** This hoary little moss has caused much confusion as the unwary run it through the *Grimmia* key to reach the scarce *G. montana* (p. 519) or the extremely rare *G. alpestris* (Smith, p. 438). *G. montana* lacks crimped leaves. *G. alpestris* has scarcely crimped leaves, and is a montane plant unlikely to share the main habitat of *C. cribrus*. The more common *G. pulvinata* (p. 526), *G. trichophylla* (p. 529) and *G. lisae* (Smith, p. 452) all have recurved leaf margins (visible with a hand lens). When fruiting, all these species have curved setae. Inland, *G. donniana* (p. 522) and *Schistidium confertum* (p. 517) are similar. *G. donniana* has long, straight setae, and *S. confertum* hides its capsules among the leaves that sheath the seta. Neither has crimped leaves. The extremely rare *G. anodon* (Smith, p. 430) and *G. crinita* (Smith, p. 431) lack the longitudinal folds seen in the leaves of *Coscinodon*, and have short, curved setae and asymmetrical capsules hidden amongst leaves sheathing the seta; both are very hoary in appearance.

**Habitat** The classic habitat of *C. cribrus* is very friable, shaly rock on coastal cliff tops in western Britain. It grows in crevices, usually on horizontal surfaces. Inland, it is a scarce plant of slate rocks in the mountains. It is occasionally found on hard, igneous rocks on the coast and very rarely on slate walls inland.