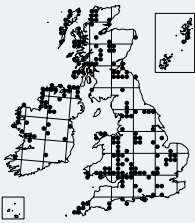


*Ditrichum gracile**D. crispatisimum*

Slender Ditrichum

Key 136



**Identification** A large and handsome moss forming lax tufts and patches up to 10 cm tall. The stems usually have sparse rhizoids. The long leaves are erect or slightly turned to one side. They are somewhat wavy when moist, and distinctly wavy when dry. The leaves are 3–6 mm long, have a clasping base, forming about one-quarter of the length, and taper to a long, fine, channelled, entire tip in which the nerve is longly excurrent.

**Similar species** When growing well, this moss is instantly recognizable, the lax patches of thin, wispy stems being distinctive. It superficially resembles species of *Dicranodontium* (pp. 388–390), but these are calcifuge species which are very unlikely to occur in the lime-rich sites preferred by *D. gracile*. The similar *D. flexicaule* (p. 348) differs in having a dense felt of rhizoids on the lower part of the stem, and modified, deciduous branches at the tip of the stems. *D. gracile* is also usually a larger and more silky plant than *D. flexicaule*.

**Habitat** A fairly common, lime-loving species of crag ledges, calcareous grassland and sand dunes, where it can be abundant.