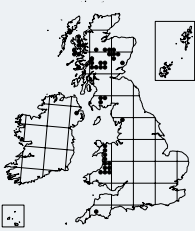


*Ditrichum lineare*

Dark Ditrichum



**Identification** Stems up to 1.5 cm, but usually smaller, and forming dense or loose patches, or just scattered plants. The shoots are narrow with rather rigid leaves that are loosely appressed, scarcely altered when dry, giving the stem a somewhat 3-sided look. The upper leaves are longer (1–1.5 mm) than the lower and taper to a blunt point. Capsules have only been found a few times in Britain.

**Similar species** Superficially resembling a number of other small, dicranaceous mosses, but the stiff, erect, narrow stems and the rather untidy patches are good characters. In the mountains confusion is possible with *D. zonatum* (p. 347), but that moss has leaves with a longer and more pointed tip and usually forms dense patches. *D. lineare* is very similar to two very rare species, *D. cornubicum* (Smith, p. 153) and *D. plumbicola* (p. 345). *D. cornubicum* holds its leaves erect or at an angle of up to 45° to the stem when moist. It grows on bare, acidic soil that is contaminated with copper in and near copper mines in Cornwall. *D. plumbicola* is usually darker green, has slightly shorter leaves that end in a less acute tip, and is confined to soil rich in lead, near mines.

**Habitat** A plant of bare, often disturbed, acidic mineral soils occurring in a variety of sites including exposed, montane ridges, areas of late-lying snow, fine scree and lower down by forest tracks and occasionally on sand by streams.