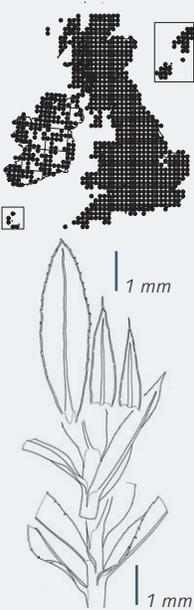


*Mnium hornum*

Swan's-neck Thyme-moss

Key 159



## Identification

This dark, dull green moss is the commonest species of the genus and one of Britain's commonest mosses. The upright stems are 2–4 cm tall. Leaves are typically about 4 mm long, but can be as long as 8 mm towards the tip of the shoot, and have a toothed border of long, narrow cells. The nerve usually ends a little below the tip of the leaf. The leaf base at most shortly runs down onto the stem. The lower part of the stem has small, narrowly triangular leaves (the two leaves on the right in the upper drawing). Capsules (5 mm long) are frequently produced, and the lid narrows abruptly into a very short point. The seta is 2.5–5 cm long.

## Similar species

*M. marginatum* (p. 614), and the rare *M. ambiguum*, *M. spinosum* and *M. thomsonii* (see under *M. marginatum* for these three species), also have bordered leaves, but prefer more base-rich habitats, and are typically less robust. Also, the lowermost leaves on the stem are more or less elliptical or egg-shaped rather than triangular, and the capsules (very rare in some species) have a beaked lid. *Atrichum undulatum* (p. 330) does not form such compact tufts, has longer (up to 10 mm long), narrower, more translucent leaves with an undulate surface, and its curved capsules are held upright rather than being pendulous. *Plagiomnium undulatum* (p. 618) also usually has undulate upper leaves, and its stems are often branched.

## Habitat

On acidic soil, logs, rocks and tree bases, often abundant in woodland; mainly lowland, but also in rather earthy crevices amongst rocks on mountains.