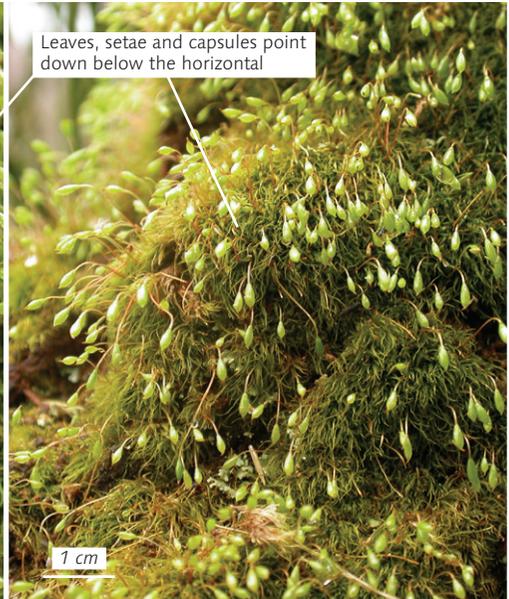
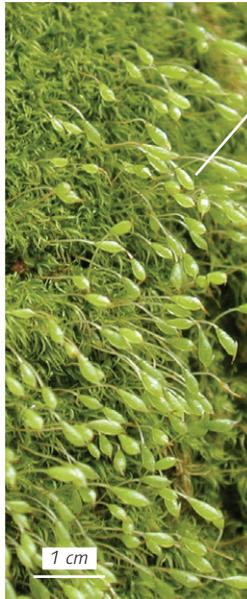
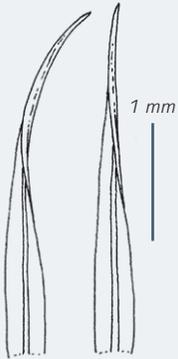
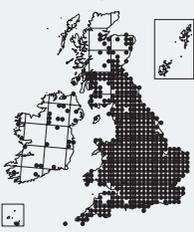


Orthodontium lineare

Cape Thread-moss

Key 151

**Identification**

This species forms fine, sometimes extensive tufts or patches up to 1 cm tall. The leaves, up to 3 mm long, are very fine with plane margins, wavy and with a slight sheen when dry, often weakly curved in one direction when moist. Capsules, which gradually taper into a seta about 5 mm long, are freely and often abundantly produced in late spring. When green and young, they are held at an oblique angle with a characteristically upturned beak. The mature and empty capsules turn reddish-brown, are erect and become distinctly furrowed. Both leaves and setae point down below the horizontal in a characteristic manner.

Similar species

Most likely to be confused with other delicate, fine-leaved mosses. The much rarer *O. gracile* (Smith, p. 527) has dull, silky, light green leaves, but has a pale, smooth capsule when mature and empty. *Dicranella heteromalla* (p. 371) is slightly more robust, with leaves usually markedly turned in one direction, and its furrowed, brown capsules are abruptly contracted into the seta. *O. lineare* may also be mistaken for *Campylopus flexuosus* (p. 395) but *C. flexuosus* has a much wider nerve and more rigid leaves.

Habitat

O. lineare grows in a wide range of base-poor habitats in both shaded and sunny places. It occurs on sandy and peaty banks, logs, stumps, on siliceous cliffs and crags, particularly sandstone where it can form extensive patches. It can tolerate less humid conditions than *O. gracile* (which normally grows on rock, very rarely on wood) and can be found in polluted districts.