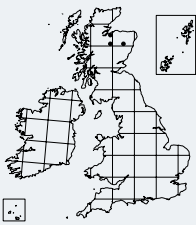
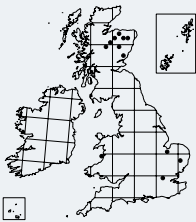


# *Orthotrichum gymnostomum*/ *obtusifolium*

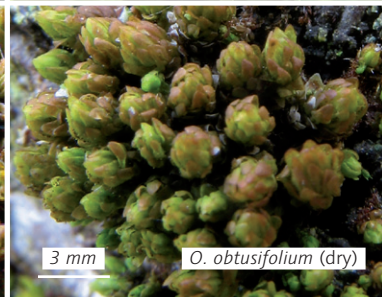
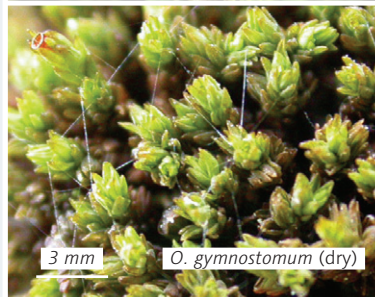
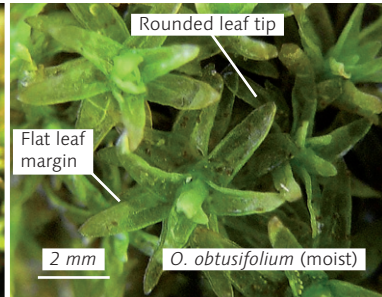
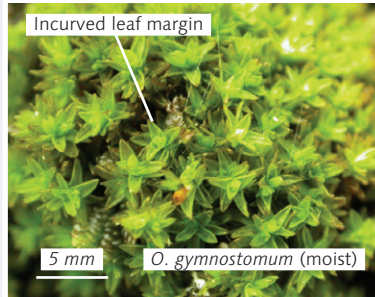
Aspen/Blunt-leaved Bristle-moss



*O. gymnostomum*



*O. obtusifolium*



## Identification

These very rare plants form tiny tufts (less than 1 cm tall) of upright, narrow shoots on tree trunks. Unlike all other British mosses that grow on trees and shrubs, they have plane or incurved leaf margins and a rounded leaf tip. The leaf margins of *O. gymnostomum* are strongly incurved, so that moist leaves appear to have a dark border. Most leaves of *O. obtusifolium* have obviously flat margins. Leaves are 1.5–2 mm long. Both species have scattered light green or brown gemmae on the leaf surfaces. Both are so rare that they must not be collected from known sites. *O. gymnostomum* produces capsules very rarely in Scotland, and those of *O. obtusifolium* have never been recorded in Britain.

## Similar species

All our other *Orthotrichum* species have a sharply or bluntly pointed rather than a rounded leaf tip, and have recurved rather than plane or incurved leaf margins. *Zygodon* species (pp. 642–645) have sharply pointed leaves (apart from the round-tipped *Z. conoideus* var. *lingulatus*; p. 642) with plane margins, and gemmae that are restricted to the leaf axils.

## Habitat

*O. gymnostomum* is restricted to aspen (*Populus tremula*) trunks in a few woods in north-east Scotland, but is reasonably frequent in one or two sites. *O. obtusifolium* is also found occasionally on aspen in woodlands, but is more typical of parkland trees in north-east Scotland. There are a few recent records of *O. obtusifolium* from southern England, including on elder (*Sambucus nigra*) in Norfolk and an apple tree (*Malus domestica*) in Cambridgeshire. A colony was found recently on a maple (*Acer*) in a town park in mid-Wales.