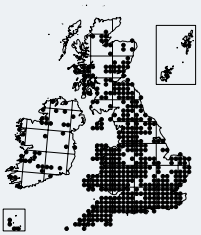
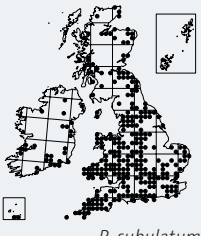
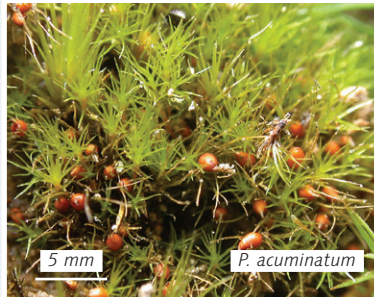
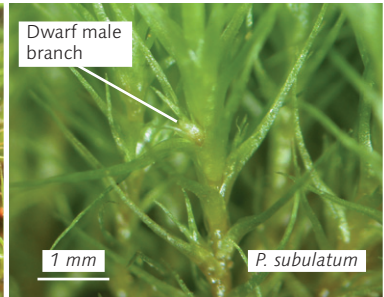
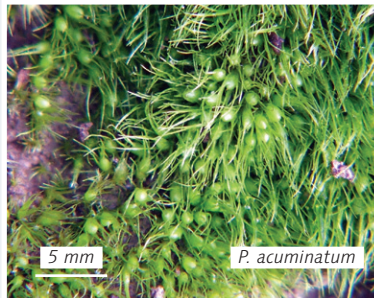
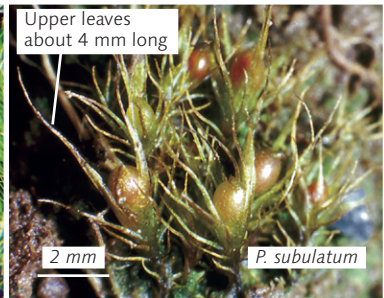


Pleuridium acuminatum/subulatum

Taper-leaved/Awl-leaved Earth-moss

Key 155

*P. acuminatum**P. subulatum**P. acuminatum**P. subulatum**P. acuminatum**P. subulatum*

Identification

These little mosses form mid-green or brownish-tinged patches which can be dense, but are often open aggregations of shoots. They are short, to 1 cm, but often less, with the upper leaves much longer than the lower (about 4 mm as opposed to about 1.5 mm), usually erect and occasionally slightly turned to one side. The leaves are spearhead-shaped, tapering relatively gradually from a base that is egg-shaped to a long, fine tip in the upper leaves where it is composed mainly of the excurrent nerve. Capsules are common, held on a very short seta, 1 mm long, hidden between the upper leaves and are shortly oval with a blunt point. *P. acuminatum* has naked male organs in the leaf axils, whereas *P. subulatum* bears them on dwarf branches (see top right photograph). The latter are easily seen with a hand lens, making identification relatively straightforward, although plants with intermediate characters do apparently occur.

Similar species

Archidium alternifolium (p. 339) has spherical capsules almost completely hidden among the leaves surrounding the capsule, and its colonies are usually composed of mats of non-fertile shoots. In *Pseudephemerum nitidum* (p. 341) the leaves surrounding the base of the seta are not very much longer than the leaves below.

Habitat

Both are pioneer species of bare soil. *P. acuminatum* tends to favour more acidic ground than *P. subulatum*.