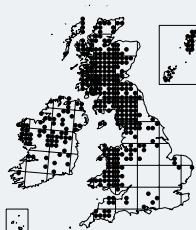


*Polytrichum strictum**P. alpestre*

Strict Haircap



Identification A densely tufted species, forming tight hummocks up to 20–40 cm tall, composed of mostly unbranched, somewhat grey-green, erect shoots. These bear short (about 1 cm long), evenly spaced, narrowly spearhead-shaped leaves with a reddish-brown tip, and untoothed, inrolled margins. These are held away from the stem when moist, and appressed to each other when dry. The stems are densely matted together below with an off-white felt of rhizoids. The shortly rectangular, sharply 4-angled capsules are borne on a rather slender, reddish seta that is 3–4 cm long. These are produced in summer, albeit less commonly than those of other *Polytrichum* species.

Similar species The untoothed, inrolled leaf margins and brown leaf tip are only shared by *P. juniperinum* (p. 325). However, *P. juniperinum* is easily distinguished by its much shorter stems that are not matted together below with a dense, off-white felt of rhizoids and by its habitat. The size, hummock-forming nature and boggy habitat of *P. strictum* might lead to confusion with *P. commune* var. *commune* (p. 322), but that has longer leaves with toothed margins (easily seen with a 20 hand lens).

Habitat The dense mounds of this species are a good indication of deep (more than 50 cm) peat deposits. It is a local and declining plant, typical of raised mires, blanket bogs, valley mires and very wet heaths, but where it occurs it may be locally abundant over extensive areas. It may rarely be found in open, damp, peaty areas in woodlands.