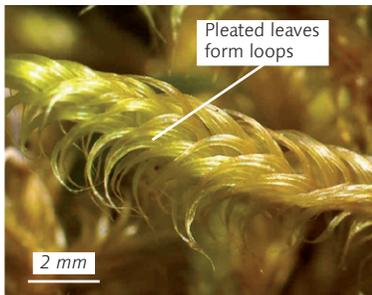
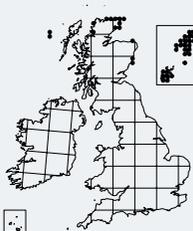


Sanionia orthothecioides

St Kilda Hook-moss



Identification *S. orthothecioides* normally grows as small or extensive wefts through other vegetation, but may form conspicuous, billowing cushions up to 20 cm across. Shoots are 5–8 cm long, sparsely and irregularly branched, and the tip is more or less erect. Its golden green (occasionally bronze or pale green) shoots and very narrow, pleated, curved leaves (3–4 mm long) that form complete loops are characteristic. The deep pleats hide the long nerve. It very rarely produces capsules in the British Isles.

Similar species Of other pleurocarps with leaves that point in one direction, only *S. uncinata* (p. 728) has such narrow leaves that form complete loops. However, *S. uncinata* is more or less pinnately branched, forms dense, untidy patches, and has leaves with a visible nerve and less marked pleats. *S. orthothecioides* and *S. uncinata* occasionally grow together in turf on cliff tops in northern Scotland. *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (p. 724) also has pleated leaves, but they do not form loops. *S. orthothecioides* superficially resembles *Drepanocladus* (pp. 713–714) or *Warnstorfia* species (pp. 715–717) whose leaves point in one direction. The leaves of *W. exannulata* (p. 716) may appear to be pleated, but are not. *W. exannulata* also differs in its shorter leaves which are often tinted orange or red. *H. vernicosus*, and *Drepanocladus* and *Warnstorfia* species grow in wet places, whereas *S. orthothecioides* favours sites that are well-drained. *Hypnum cupressiforme* (p. 802), *H. lacunosum* (p. 803) or *H. jutlandicum* (p. 806) often grow with *S. orthothecioides*, but the leaves lack a nerve, do not form complete loops and are not pleated. *H. lacunosum* is particularly likely to occur in abundance in sites where *S. orthothecioides* is found.

Habitat *S. orthothecioides* nearly always grows within 100 m of the sea or edge of a sea-cliff, in short, lightly or ungrazed, herb-rich grassland or heathland. In windy sites, shoots may occasionally get blown around and lie loose in the vegetation.