

Sphagnum inundatum

S. auriculatum var. *inundatum*, *S. subsecundum* subsp. *inundatum*

Lesser Cow-horn Bog-moss

Section Subsecunda



Stem leaf

1 mm



Branch leaf



Identification

A medium to large species. In open habitats *S. inundatum* appears golden orange-brown, while in shade it is yellow-green or all green. The capitulum is somewhat stellate, with outer branches straight or curved only at the tip. The branch leaves are spreading, not appressed to the branch, giving the capitulum and upper branches a spiky appearance, hence, despite the common name, not looking like cows' horns. On the lower part of the branches, some leaves are asymmetrical, the upper half turned to one side when viewed from above. Fascicles usually have 5 or more branches, all with well-developed leaves. Typically there are 2 strongly divergent branches, 2 deflexed to pendent, and 1 more or less hanging vertically down the stem. The stem is dark brown to almost black, or green in shaded forms. Stem leaves are nearly always more or less triangular. The whole shoot is about 10–15 mm wide and parallel-sided. Capsules are occasional.

Similar species

Well-coloured plants of open habitats, as described above, are elegant and neat, resembling a large version of *S. subsecundum* (p. 296). Small forms of *S. inundatum* can only be distinguished from that species by microscopical examination. Typical *S. inundatum* is very different from typical *S. denticulatum* (p. 298); however, forms do occur which cannot be determined to species level with confidence in the field, or sometimes even after microscopical examination.

Habitat

Despite its name, it is rarely found submerged. It occurs in slightly more base-rich habitats than *S. denticulatum*, for example poor fens, swampy ground, mildly base-rich pools, in ditches and at the edges of flushes.