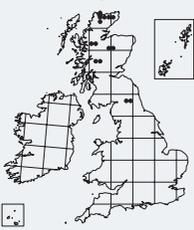
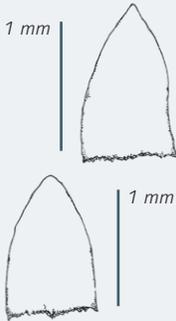


Sphagnum majus

Olive Bog-moss

Section *Cuspidata*

Stem leaves



Identification

A medium to large species, *S. majus* occurs as scattered plants or in small patches, emergent or semi-submerged. Capitula are olive or khaki, with a clearly visible terminal bud. All branches in a fascicle are similar in appearance, only varying in length. Branch leaves are about 5 times as long as wide, and only slightly longer relative to width at the branch tip. Leaves are straight along the proximal half of branches, becoming more curved towards the branch tip and are not in straight lines. Stem leaves are rounded-triangular, 1.5–2 times as long as wide, usually concave, pendent-spreading or spreading. Capsules are very rare.

Similar species

Superficially similar to some forms of *S. cuspidatum* (p. 302) and *S. fallax* (p. 306) with which it grows. The challenge is to select likely specimens from amongst these two common species for examination. The uniformly coloured, rather dingy capitulum is the best initial guide. *S. fallax* usually has 2 juvenile branches visible between the capitulum rays (*S. majus* has only 1), its branch leaves are more clearly in straight lines and never curved, and its stem leaves are flat, forming a more or less equilateral triangle (scarcely longer than wide), and are more appressed to the stem. Aquatic or semi-submerged *S. cuspidatum* has very long, thin and obviously curved leaves near the branch tip, contrasting with those nearer the branch base. *S. majus* has much less variable branch leaves, which are never as long, thin and curved. Its stem leaves are rounded-triangular and not as sharply pointed as those of *S. cuspidatum*. The capitulum of *S. majus* has a clearly visible terminal bud; that of *S. cuspidatum* is invisible. Identification of *S. majus* requires microscopical confirmation.

Habitat

Found in nutrient-poor to weakly nutrient-enriched pools and wet hollows in bogs. Its close associates are *S. cuspidatum* and *S. denticulatum*, and less frequently *S. fallax*. *S. majus* does not occur submerged, except during floods.