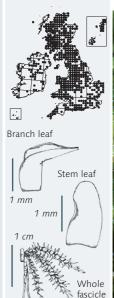
Sphagnum squarrosum

Spiky Bog-moss

Section Squarrosa





Identification Robust, bright green, spiky-looking plants. Branch leaves, wide in the basal half, are abruptly contracted to a pointed, tapering, tubular tip, which is distinctly curved away from the branch. The terminal bud is large and conical, immersed or slightly projecting above the rest of the capitulum. Stem leaves are large, rectangular, broad across the tip, and weak and floppy. Capsules are common.

Similar species Typically robust forms are easily identified. S. palustre (p. 279) in very wet or shaded sites can have branch leaves that strongly curve away from the branch, and is of a similar size. However, that species has hooded branch leaves and a wide stem cortex. Small plants are very similar to green forms of the closely related S. teres (p. 282) in which the leaves curve only slightly away from the branch. The terminal bud offers a useful discriminating character: more or less immersed in S. squarrosum, standing well above the capitulum in S. teres (view capitulum from the side). However, some forms can be problematic to distinguish, even when using microscopic characters, and the best solution is to look in the vicinity for more characteristic specimens of one or both species. Also see S. strictum (p. 294).

Habitat Typically found in swampy ground that is moderately to well-enriched with nutrients, such as in wet woodland, or amongst sedges (Carex), rushes (Juncus) or purple moor-grass (Molinia), for example on stream banks, in ditches, or in flushes on moorland. Occasionally found at high altitude in wet, rocky corries.