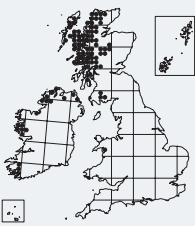


Sphagnum strictum

Pale Bog-moss

Section Rigida



Branch leaf

1 mm



Detail of branch leaf tip



2 mm

Identification

A medium-sized species, growing in mats or loose hummocks. Branch leaves are a mix of light and whitish-green, sometimes with pale salmon-pink or brown at the tip. Occasionally, a few stems have whole leaves that are more or less pale tan. Branch leaves are sometimes straight, but are generally strongly curved away from the branch, pointed, with a truncate tip that has small teeth (seen with a 20 hand lens). Stems are pale green to light brown, never dark. Stem leaves are minute, only about a quarter of the length of the branch leaves, triangular and point downwards. Capsules are frequent.

Similar species

S. compactum (p. 295) is sometimes pale and can have widely spreading leaves, but they do not strongly curve away from the branch. It is also distinguished by its apparently hooded branch leaves and dark stem. Large specimens of *S. strictum* resemble *S. squarrosum* (p. 281) or forms of *S. palustre* (p. 279) with leaves that strongly curve away from the branch, but both these species have large stem leaves. *S. palustre* also has a wide stem cortex and hooded branch leaves. *S. squarrosum* has more acutely pointed branch leaves and is bright green.

Habitat

Occurs, often amongst purple moor-grass (*Molinia*) in wet heath, boggy grassland, shallow blanket bog and on very humid, rocky slopes. Almost exclusively western, growing in districts with high rainfall.