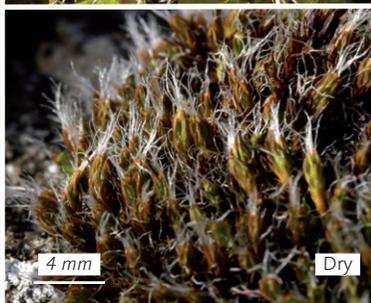
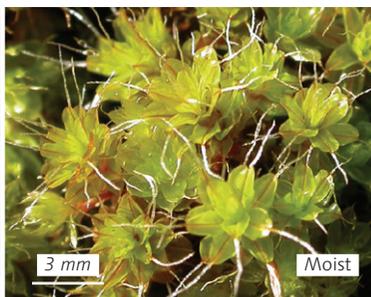
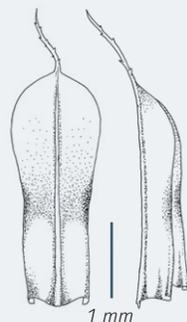


Syntrichia intermedia

S. montana, *Tortula intermedia*

Intermediate Screw-moss

Key 122



Identification

S. intermedia is dull green to golden green and grows in tufts or loose cushions. Stems can range from 1 to 4 cm tall. When dry, the approximately 4 mm long leaves are spirally twisted or incurved, giving the plant a distinctive appearance. The leaf is slightly narrowed at the halfway point, the lower half having recurved margins. The tip is rounded and flat. The leaves spread out widely from the stem when moist, but are not strongly recurved. Dry leaves may appear pointed because they fold up along their length, making them seem tapered at the tip (the rounded tip is an important field character for this species). The stout, reddish-brown nerve projects from the leaf tip into a long, silvery white hair point with small, coarse teeth. Capsules are cylindrical and erect, ripening to a reddish-brown. They are frequent, and are produced in spring and summer.

Similar species

S. ruralis (pp. 494–495) is golden green, sometimes tinged reddish-brown. It is often bigger than *S. intermedia*, but small plants on tarmac, concrete, etc. can be difficult to distinguish from *S. intermedia*. The leaves of *S. ruralis* are strongly recurved from the stem when moist, and are concave, with the leaf margins recurved almost to the rounded tip. The hair point has larger teeth, and capsules are rare. The very common *Tortula muralis* (p. 479) is found in similar habitats, but is much smaller, with a smooth, silvery hair point and the margins recurved almost to the leaf tip. *S. virescens* (p. 498) looks rather like a smaller version of *S. intermedia*, and is rarer, but it may not be possible to distinguish all specimens without microscopical examination. Fruiting plants on sunny, montane rocks should be checked for *S. princeps* (p. 497).

Habitat

S. intermedia is usually found in calcareous places. Typical habitats include roofs, calcareous rocks and walls and sunny, exposed, stony ground. It is common and widespread in most of lowland Britain.