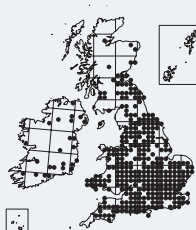


Syntrichia latifolia

Tortula latifolia

Water Screw-moss

Key 175, 273



Identification *S. latifolia* grows in yellowish-green or dull green, 1–3 cm tall, often silt-encrusted patches which can be quite extensive. The broad (up to 1.5 mm), soft leaves are nearly 3 mm long, and spread when moist, becoming incurved and rather shrivelled when dry. The nerve ends in the broadly rounded leaf tip and the margins are usually plane. The upper surface of the leaf is often strewn with small, spherical gemmae of a similar size and appearance to pollen grains. The cylindrical capsules are rare.

Similar species *Dalytrichia mucronata* (p. 446) often grows with *S. latifolia*, and is darker green, with thickened margins to its leaves. *Orthotrichum sprucei* (p. 650) also has blunt-tipped leaves and grows beside running water, but its leaves are longer relative to their width. Where *S. latifolia* occurs away from water it can be distinguished from *Encalypta streptocarpa* (p. 557) by its leaves wider relative to their length.

Habitat Most typically it grows on trees, but also on rocks and walls, in the flood zone of streams and rivers where it is often heavily encrusted with silt, and therefore difficult to detect. It is most abundant in southern, lowland parts of Britain. *S. latifolia* is also almost ubiquitous on shaded tarmac roads and paths in parts of western Britain.