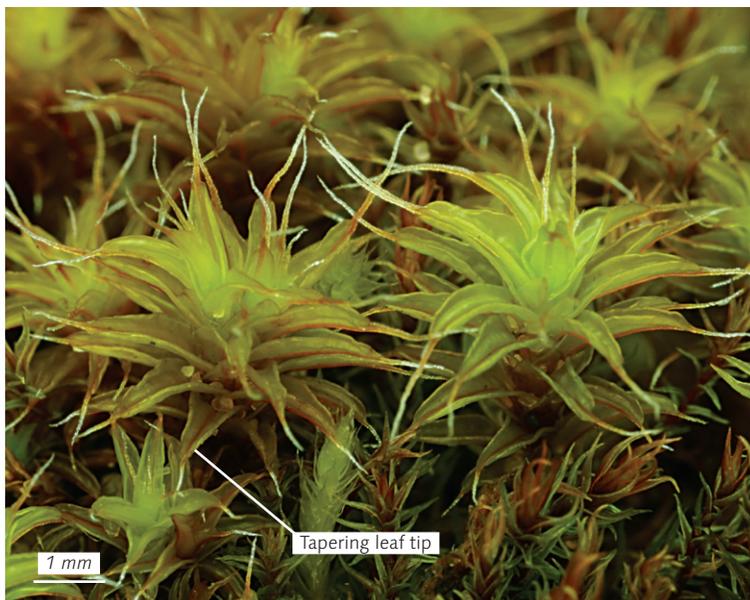
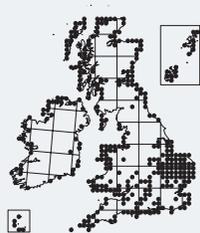


*Syntrichia ruralis* subsp. *ruraliformis**Tortula ruraliformis*

Sand-hill Screw-moss

Key 113

**Identification**

Shoots are up to several centimetres long, but often partly buried in sand. They are yellowish-green to golden brown when moist, and golden brown when dry. Leaves are typically 4–6 mm long, and gradually taper to a tip which bears a long, toothed, silvery hair point. Leaves curve strongly away from the stem when moist, and are curled and twisted when dry. The cylindrical capsules are rare.

**Similar species**

Can be confused with *S. ruralis* subsp. *ruralis* (p. 494) which, however, either forms discrete cushions or grows as extensive turfs that are shorter than those of subsp. *ruraliformis*. Subsp. *ruralis* also has a blunter, more rounded leaf tip. These two subspecies may occur together (sometimes as mixed stands), both on the coast and inland. *S. ruralis* subsp. *ruraliformis* is often markedly taller than *S. ruralis* subsp. *ruralis*. *S. intermedia* (p. 496) has leaves which are contracted below the middle, plane above, and do not curve so strongly away from the stem when moist.

**Habitat**

Often forms extensive mats on loose sand in unstable coastal dunes. Also grows on sandy banks and cliffs on the coast, and sometimes in sandy places such as on roadsides and heaths. Occasionally found on stony or rocky ground, and increasingly frequent inland in south-east England in other habitats, especially on concrete standings and corrugated asbestos roofs.