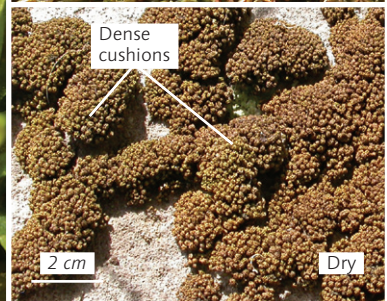
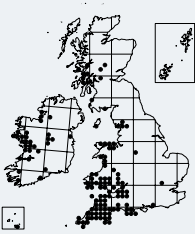


Tortella nitida

Neat Crisp-moss



Identification Dry colonies look very neat, with the leaves tightly curled over each other to form dense cushions 0.5–1 cm tall. The smooth-backed nerve makes these cushions look rather shiny. Moist colonies have an untidy appearance as all but a few leaves will have lost the tip. Leaves are about 1.5–2.5 mm long. *T. nitida* is darker green than other *Tortella* species.

Similar species *T. bambergeri* (p. 429) also has fragile leaves. Look for intact leaves, as those of *T. nitida* are broader than those of *T. bambergeri*. When dry, *T. bambergeri* has leaves held in vertical spirals, whereas the leaves of *T. nitida* are tightly curled over each other, giving a denser dry cushion. Other mosses on wall tops do not have a fragile leaf tip, apart from *Didymodon sinuosus* (p. 464), which grows in looser tufts or turfs and lacks a shiny back to the nerve.

Habitat A south-western species in Britain that grows mostly in dry, sunny situations. It is frequent as rounded tufts on limestone outcrops set just back from the sea and on limestone pavement inland. It can also form extensive patches on church walls and wall tops in coastal towns.