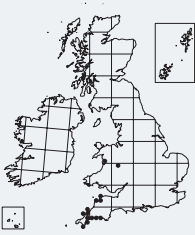
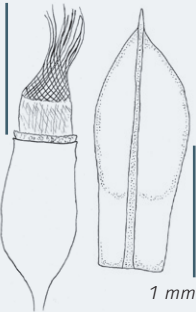


Tortula canescens

Dog Screw-moss



1 mm



Identification Plants that appear to be *T. muralis* (p. 479) growing on dry soil should be checked for this rare species. Shoots occur in patches or scattered, 1–5 mm tall, bright green when moist, and hoary when dry. The concave leaves are about 1.5–2 mm long and have a rounded tip, with a longly excurrent, smooth, silvery nerve and plane margins. Cylindrical capsules are common in late winter and spring.

Similar species Many *Syntrichia* species (pp. 494–501) also have tongue-shaped leaves with silvery, excurrent nerves, but are normally larger mosses (0.5 to several centimetres tall), with toothed or finely toothed excurrent nerves; *Syntrichia laevipila* (p. 499) populations growing on rock are especially problematic and require careful microscopical examination. *T. muralis* (p. 479) is often taller (to 1 cm), usually forms tufts and cushions, has recurved leaf margins, and does not usually grow on soil. However, the safest distinguishing feature is the peristome – in *T. canescens* the teeth are united for one-third to half of their length, whereas in *T. muralis* they are free of each other almost to the base. *T. viridifolia* (p. 484) and *T. wilsonii* (Smith, p. 358) also have an excurrent nerve, but it is not silvery.

Habitat *T. canescens* is mainly a coastal moss, growing on acidic soil that is intermittently desiccated in summer (often overlying sandstone) amongst turf and on south-facing banks. *T. canescens* also grows on and between rocks, in crevices of rocks and on unshaded walls.