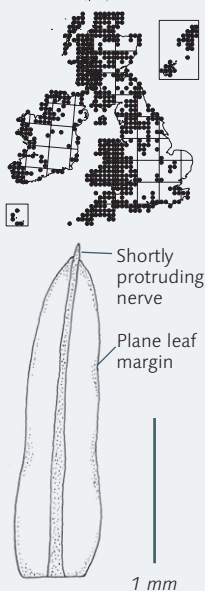


*Trichostomum brachydontium*

Variable Crisp-moss

Key 162, 219, 249

**Identification**

This moss forms yellow-green to dark green patches or tufts 1–4 cm tall. Its tongue-shaped leaves are 2–4 mm long and typically have a blunt tip with a shortly excurrent nerve. However, *T. brachydontium* is very variable, and the leaves can sometimes be slender with a tapering tip. The leaves are held at an angle of up to 45° or are recurved away from the stem when moist, but crisped and incurved when dry. The leaf margins are normally plane, but may be narrowly recurved. The oval-oblong or narrowly elliptical capsules are rare in spring, and borne on a yellow seta.

**Similar species**

*T. crispulum* (p. 434) has leaves with a hooded tip. *T. tenuirostre* (p. 435) may look very like *T. brachydontium*, but is typically dull green, and brown or almost black below. *Tortula subulata* (p. 475) nearly always has capsules. *Barbula unguiculata* (p. 455) is similarly very curled when dry, but its leaves are only 1.5–2 mm long, and have recurved margins. *Tortella flavovirens* (p. 432) grows in similar coastal habitats and looks very similar, but has a V-shaped transition from colourless to green cells at the base of the leaf. Also, the lower part of the shoots of *T. brachydontium* is usually browner than *T. flavovirens*, and the leaves of *T. brachydontium* have inrolled margins when dry. *Anoetangium aestivum* (p. 452) is smaller, and its nerve ends in or just below the leaf tip. *Weissia longifolia* (p. 427) has much narrower leaves in relation to their length. *Tortula marginata* (p. 477) has shorter leaves (1.75–2.5 mm long) with a pale border. *Schistidium maritimum* (p. 506) is normally darker and usually has capsules.

**Habitat**

*T. brachydontium* may be the most abundant acrocarp on many coastal slopes, where it grows on either base-rich or acidic soil or rock. Inland, however, where salt does not affect conditions, it occurs only on base-rich substrates. Its habitats include stony ground, crevices of rocks, soil-capped ledges, lane banks, bare soil and dunes. It may grow in unshaded or shaded places, for example in rocky woodlands.