

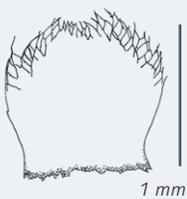
Sphagnum fimbriatum

Fringed Bog-moss

Section Acutifolia



Stem leaf



Identification Grows as slender, elongated stems, forming loose carpets or soft hummocks. It is all green, apart from the end of male branches which can be brownish; there is never any trace of red or pink. Capitula are small, with a very conspicuous terminal bud. Branches are very long and thin. Stem leaves are fan-shaped, often wider than long, and narrowest at or near the base, forming a more or less complete, stiff, erect ruff around the stem (obvious when capitulum is removed), fringed around the whole upper margin and slightly down the sides. Capsules are common, often abundant.

Similar species More likely to be overlooked than misidentified, as at a casual glance it might be mistaken for a green, etiolated form of a number of species. The very prominent terminal bud, limp appearance and common presence of capsules are, in combination, good field characters. The stem leaves are virtually unmistakable, but are only clearly seen when a capitulum is removed. *S. girgensohnii* (p. 284) is also usually green, and has fringed stem leaves, but only in the central portion of the leaf tip, with the leaf shoulders intact and rounded. The only *Sphagnum* with similarly shaped leaves is the rare *S. lindbergii* (p. 310), but in that species the stem leaves hang down the stem (not erect), and the whole plant is orange-brown.

Habitat This species is shade-tolerant and is found in damp sites that are moderately enriched with nutrients, especially amongst birch (*Betula*), willow (*Salix*) and purple moor-grass (*Molinia*). Also found in more open sites, for example damp banks, sides of streams, ditches, lake margins, fens and *Juncus* mires.