**Sphagnum fuscum**

**Rusty Bog-moss**

**Section Acutifolia**

*Identification*

Forms compact, ginger-brown hummocks, typically up to 50 cm tall and 75 cm across at the base, but can be much larger. The highly characteristic colour is often best developed in the interior of the hummocks. Individual capitula are flat-topped and therefore the hummocks have a smooth profile (not like cauliflower florets). The shoots never have any trace of red or pink. All or partly green forms occur occasionally. Stems are dark brown to almost black. Stem leaves are long and broadly rounded at the tip. Capsules are rare.

*Similar species*

Typical examples can be identified almost at a glance, as the combination of colour and smooth surface to the hummocks is unique. *S. austinii* (p. 276) is the only other *Sphagnum* species that forms large brownish hummocks in the same habitat. Lax, green forms are closest to *S. capillifolium* (p. 288), although they can usually be distinguished by the dark stem, but may require microscopical examination to confirm. Atypical brownish forms of *S. subnitens* (p. 291) have stem leaves with an acute tip.

*Habitat*

Grows on undisturbed parts of raised or blanket bogs, and on peaty slopes above 500 m altitude; more rarely as hummocks within flushes.