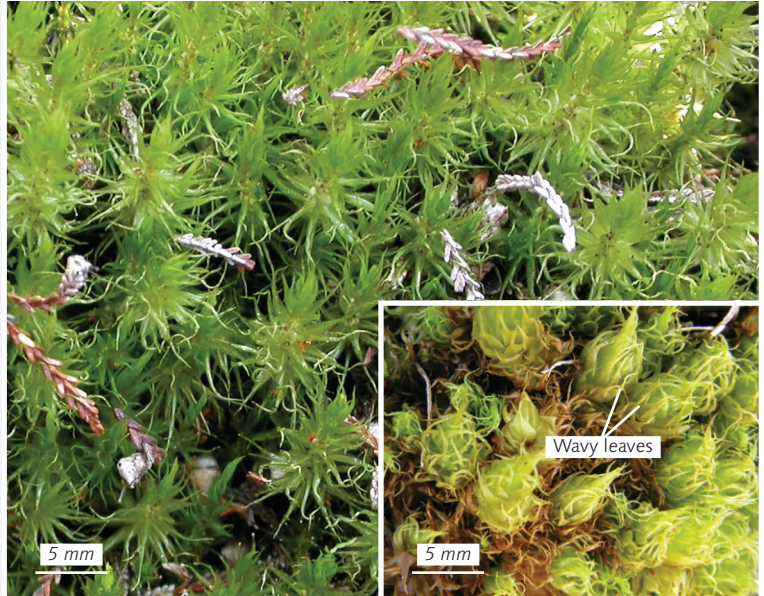
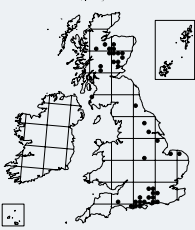


Dicranum spurium

Rusty Fork-moss



Identification The rather fat stems of this moss form small, open turfs, or frequently just scattered shoots. The 5–7 mm long leaves are broader than in other *Dicranum* species, but still taper to a fine tip, where the cells of the leaf blade are visible through a hand lens on either side of the nerve. The margins of the leaves are variously toothed, sometimes strongly so. The leaves are irregularly undulate, and older leaves point away from the stem. This and the broader, irregularly undulate leaf give the plant a characteristic habit, particularly when dry.

Similar species Not likely to be confused with any other *Dicranum* species; the dry shoots are more likely to be overlooked as shrivelled stems of *Mnium hornum* (p. 612).

Habitat A rare moss of heathland, both dry and wet, usually where there is some shelter, often offered by leggy heather. *D. spurium* is declining in southern Britain, but probably still under-recorded in north-eastern Scotland where a number of new sites have been found recently under tall, open heather on dry banks.