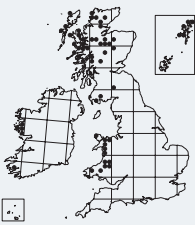


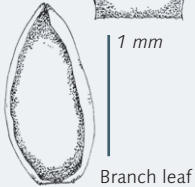
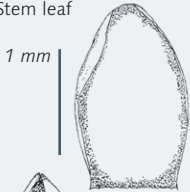
Sphagnum platyphyllum

Flat-leaved Bog-moss

Section Subsecunda



Stem leaf



Branch leaf



Identification

A small- to medium-sized *Sphagnum*. Green, yellowish or brown, occurring as scattered stems or in loose carpets. Capitula are small and poorly developed, often consisting of little more than a large terminal bud with 1 or 2 branches around it. Branches are short and blunt, 1–3 per fascicle, and are all similar in appearance and size. The stem is pale to light brown, never dark brown or black, but can appear dark owing to staining in swampy habitats. Stem leaves are strongly concave, elliptical and as large as or larger than the branch leaves, and of similar shape. Capsules have not been recorded in Britain or Ireland.

Similar species

The only possible confusion is with more or less submerged, small forms of *S. denticulatum* (p. 298). *S. platyphyllum* has more obviously concave and elliptical stem leaves, which are not significantly shorter than the branch leaves, a much more prominent terminal bud and fascicles with 1 or no pendent branches. The best solution is to look around: *S. platyphyllum* will be uniformly small and brownish, whereas *S. denticulatum* will gradually become larger and brighter as drier ground is reached. However, the two species can grow together and so care is needed when selecting specimens for examination.

Habitat

This is probably the most base-demanding *Sphagnum*. It occurs in flushes, fens and pools, sometimes at edges of open, stony, calcareous flushes, and rarely with other species of *Sphagnum*. Surprisingly, *S. platyphyllum* and *S. contortum* rarely grow together and so must have quite different habitat requirements.