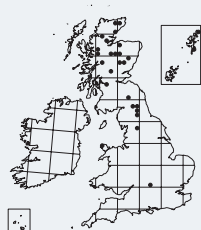


*Sphagnum riparium*

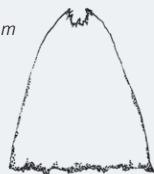
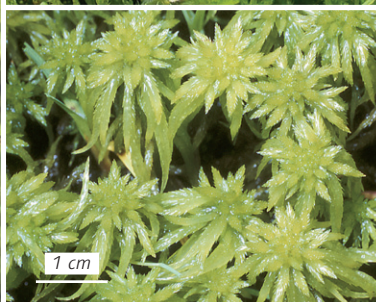
Cleft Bog-moss

Section Cuspidata



Stem leaf

1 mm

Detail  
of stem  
leaf tip

## Identification

Robust, all green, or rarely yellowish to brownish, never with any trace of pink. Capitula are stellate, with a prominent terminal bud. Spreading branches are long, cylindrical and pointed at the tip, like a rat's tail. Stem leaves are large and triangular, with a deeply notched tip, sometimes looking as if torn. Capsules are very rare.

## Similar species

Small plants might be overlooked for other green species of Section Cuspidata, for example *S. fallax* (p. 306), though these all lack the deeply notched, large stem leaf of *S. riparium* and tend to be much less robust. However, stem leaves of these other species can be damaged, for example when capitula or branches are removed, and hence might imitate those of *S. riparium*. If in doubt, the stem leaf of *S. riparium* has enlarged cells in the central apical part of the leaf (seen with a 20 hand lens), which the related species lack. *S. girgensohnii* (p. 284; Section Acutifolia) also has a stellate capitulum and prominent terminal bud, and is a similar colour, but is smaller and has 1 (not 2) juvenile branches visible between the capitulum rays. Its stem leaf is erect and tattered at the tip.

## Habitat

Typically found in weakly to moderately base-rich springs, flushes and in poor fens.