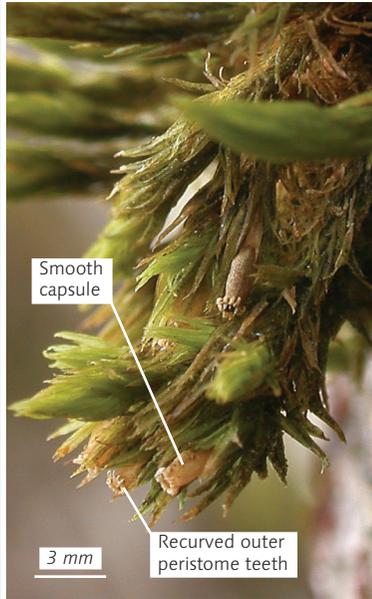
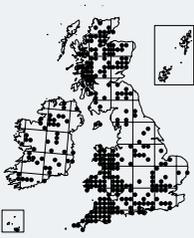


Orthotrichum striatum

Smooth Bristle-moss

Key 284



Identification

There is a window of opportunity from late winter to early summer during which *O. striatum* can be identified, thanks to its capsules which are distinctively smooth after they have shed their lid. The capsules are 1.75–2 mm long, and topped by a set of 16 recurved, white outer peristome teeth, as well as 16 straight inner teeth. Unripe capsules are relatively broader than those of *O. affine* and sit under a short, light green, hairy calyptra. Capsules are also partly obscured by leaves that are, like all the leaves of *O. striatum*, very sharply tipped. The margins are recurved. The loose, branched tufts of *O. striatum* are 0.5–3 cm tall, usually dingy brownish-green, but may be mid-green. Leaves are about 3 mm long.

Similar species

After shedding their lid, the mature capsules of almost all our other *Orthotrichum* species are strongly furrowed. The most frequent species with relatively smooth capsules are *O. rupestre* (p. 655), which tends to grow on rocks rather than trees and shrubs, and has 8 erect outer peristome teeth, and the very scarce *O. speciosum* (Smith, p. 670), which holds its capsules well above the leaves. It is also worth checking *O. striatum* for two Mediterranean species: *O. shawii* (Smith, p. 669) lacks an inner peristome, whilst *O. acuminatum* (*Journal of Bryology* 31, 47–49) has almost no outer peristome. There are single British records of each species, but both are spreading in Europe.

Habitat

O. striatum is fairly frequent in western and north-eastern parts of Britain, and in some places is almost as common as *O. affine*. However, it declined dramatically in polluted areas, and is only just starting to reappear in most of lowland Britain. It tends to grow in small quantity on twigs of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) or willow (*Salix*), or on the trunks of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) or sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and favours sheltered places.