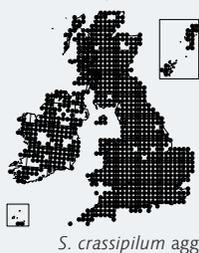


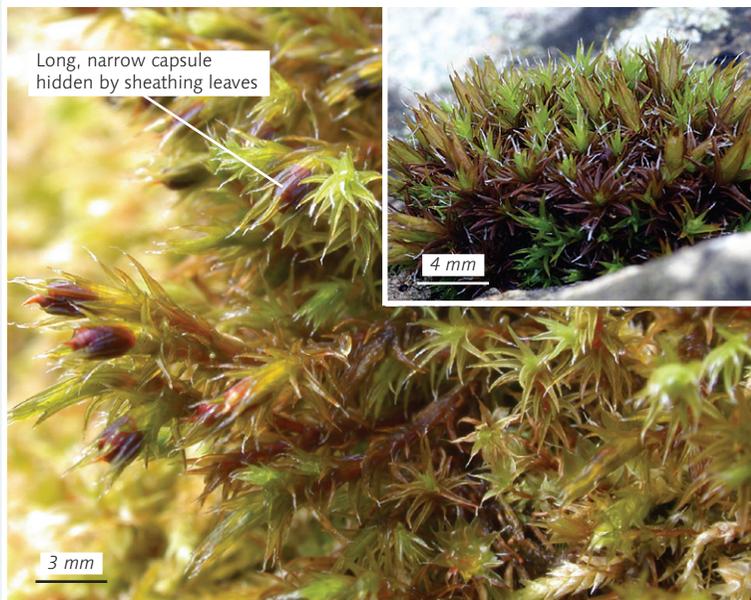
Schistidium crassipilum

Thickpoint Grimmia

Key 118



S. crassipilum agg.



Identification This is by far the commonest *Schistidium* in lowland Britain, and is the only member of the genus likely to be found in much of England. It grows as rounded cushions or flat patches 1–3 cm tall. These usually look hoary owing to the presence of a hair point at the tip of the leaves. Lower leaves are about 1.75–2.25 mm long; those surrounding the capsules may exceed 3 mm. The capsules, largely hidden by the leaves that sheath them, are characteristic of *Schistidium* and distinguish the genus from other hoary mosses on walls.

Similar species Characters differentiating *S. crassipilum* from other members of the genus are given under each species (pp. 506–510, 512–518). The length of hair points may vary greatly, even on a single wall, so that neighbouring colonies may look like several different *Schistidium* species. Characteristic features include straight hair points with a flattened base, and long, narrow capsules. With a microscope, the slightly toothed upper leaf margins rule out all other British species except *S. apocarpum* (p. 510). Hoary cushions of *S. crassipilum* can be confused with *Grimmia pulvinata* (p. 526), which has leaves that taper abruptly into the hair point and capsules on a curved seta. *Tortula muralis* (p. 479) has oblong leaves, strongly recurved margins and a long seta. Turfs of young plants can look like *Didymodon* species (pp. 456–467), but careful checking will reveal short hair points. *Orthotrichum anomalum* (p. 656) occasionally has dead leaf tips that appear to be hair points; both it and *O. diaphanum* (p. 654) have furrowed empty capsules and hairy calyptrae. The leaves of *Hedwigia stellata* (p. 665) lack a nerve.

Habitat Calcareous walls are the main habitat of *S. crassipilum* and this species can be found throughout the country in man-made habitats. Sometimes it grows on tarmac paths. More natural habitats include blocks of limestone and base-rich sandstone.