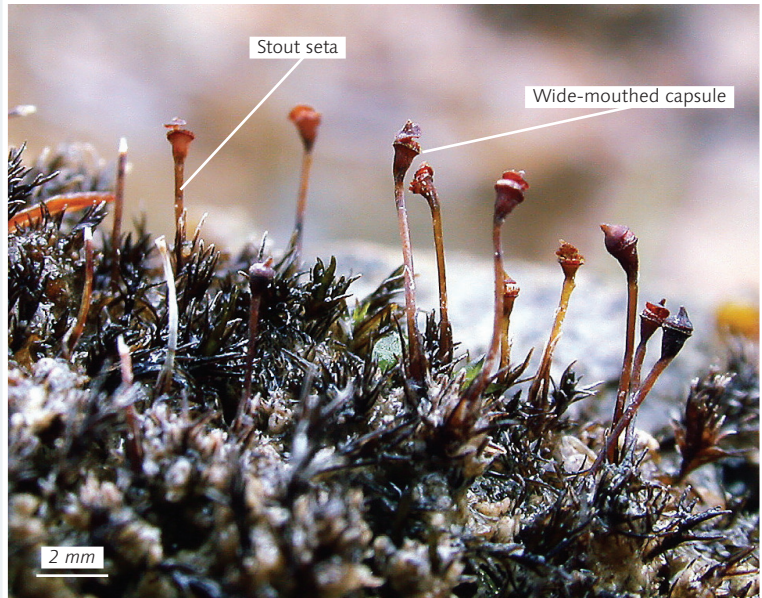
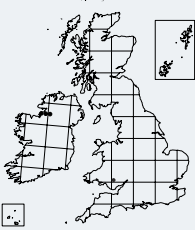


Seligeria oelandica

Irish Rock-bristle



Identification This is a very distinctive, exceptionally rare species. Its shoots are 5–15 mm tall and almost black with leaves that are about 1 mm long, spearhead-shaped, and narrow more or less abruptly to a stout point. Capsules are common, wide-mouthed, shaped like a top, and held clear of the leaves on a straight and very stout seta. Unusually, the column of tissue in the centre of the capsule persists, with the lid remaining attached to it for some time after the capsule has opened.

Similar species The stout seta, persistent column of tissue in the centre of the capsule with the lid attached, and the habitat make it easy to distinguish *S. oelandica* from other *Seligeria* species. An even rarer species, *S. carniolica* (Smith, p. 491), also has a very stout seta, but has not recently been observed with capsules. It is dark green, with very long, thin, pointed, curved leaves, and apparently restricted to a single population on impure limestone rocks beside a stream in Northumberland.

Habitat Restricted to the Benbulbin range in Ireland, and a single site in south Wales, *S. oelandica* grows only on flushed, vertical, limestone rock faces, and occasionally on limestone rocks on sloping hillside flushes.