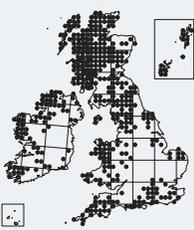


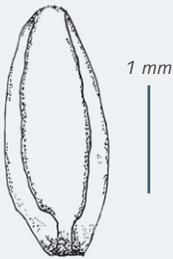
*Sphagnum compactum*

Compact Bog-moss

Section Rigida



Branch leaf



## Identification

Forms compact, dense mats or, less frequently, slightly taller, looser cushions. Pale green, or more typically a mix of autumn colours – yellow, orange and brown. The capitula are concealed by crowded, upward-pointing branches, and individual stems are usually so densely packed that the impression is of a smooth, velvety surface rather than one of closely packed but individually distinct capitula. Stems are dark brown or black. Stem leaves are minute, only about a quarter of the length of the branch leaves, triangular and point downwards. *S. compactum* is unusual in that it generally grows separate from other species of *Sphagnum*. Its discrete isolated patches are characteristic. Capsules are frequent.

## Similar species

In habit, *S. compactum* resembles *Leucobryum glaucum* (p. 403), but that species is a pale whitish-green and can form much larger hummocks. Very compact forms of *S. palustre* (p. 279) and *S. papillosum* (p. 278) may look similar, but have very large stem leaves and a wide stem cortex. *S. molle* (p. 293) can have a similar habit, but is pale green, with a hint of pink, and has very large stem leaves. The related *S. strictum* (p. 294) is normally laxer in habit and never has a dark stem. *S. compactum* has straight lower branch leaves that may extend at 90° to the branch, whereas *S. strictum* has some leaves which are distinctly curved away from the branch. The branch leaves of *S. compactum* appear to be hooded in the field (though actually they are not), whereas those of *S. strictum* are pointed, with a truncate and minutely toothed tip.

## Habitat

A moss of wet heaths and other acidic, sometimes disturbed, wet ground. A poor competitor, it is usually found in open vegetation with some bare ground.