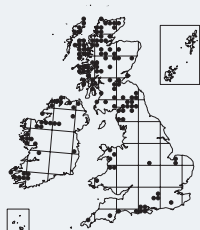


*Sphagnum molle*

Blushing Bog-moss

Section Acutifolia



Stem leaf



**Identification** Forms tight mats, with a smooth, velvety surface, the shoot branches squeezed together and pointing upwards, making individual capitula hardly discernible. May also occur as looser, low cushions. Often found in small amounts, but can occur in quite large, pure stands. Pale or whitish-green, with a hint of pink, and never strongly coloured. Branch leaves are broad, concave, widest at mid-leaf and not abruptly narrowed towards the tip. The stem is pale or flecked with pink. Stem leaves are large – very large in comparison to branch leaves – and are widest at mid-leaf. Cushions often have unbranched stems mixed in with normal branched stems. Capsules are common.

**Similar species** In habit *S. molle* is most like *S. compactum* (p. 295), but *S. compactum* has minute, triangular stem leaves, a dark stem and is usually richly coloured. Lax forms might be overlooked as a weak, pale specimen of another Acutifolia *Sphagnum*. Small patches of pale green *S. subnitens* (p. 291) are often mistakenly identified as *S. molle*.

**Habitat** Occurs on wet heaths, boggy grassland, damp peaty streamsidings, mainly but not exclusively in western districts with high rainfall.