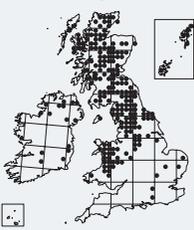


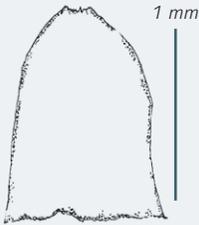
Sphagnum russowii

Russow's Bog-moss

Section Acutifolia



Stem leaf



Identification

S. russowii is a medium to large plant, found in soft hummocks or loose carpets. There is usually some red present, often with a banded appearance owing to irregular pigmentation; it is sometimes all deep red, but only rarely all green. The capitulum is flat-topped and stellate, with a definite but inconspicuous terminal bud. Fascicles have 2 spreading branches and 1 or 2 pendent branches. Branch leaves are usually in straight lines. The stem leaf is tongue-shaped, with a rounded tip that is usually notched or fringed (hence looks truncate). It is often necessary to examine several stem leaves before a clear example of this tip shape can be seen. Capsules are rare.

Similar species

In structure, this species is most like *S. girgensohnii* (p. 284), but that species never has any trace of red, has a more prominent terminal bud, branch leaves that are never in straight lines and stem leaves that differ in shape at the tip. *S. capillifolium* subsp. *rubellum* (p. 288) shares the flat-topped, stellate capitula, but lacks a terminal bud and the rather similar stem leaves are not truncate or notched at the tip. *S. warnstorffii* (p. 287) grows in more base-rich mires and is often an especially vivid red, with markedly 5-ranked branch leaves. *S. quinquefarium* (p. 286) has 3 spreading branches per fascicle. A central Norwegian species similar to *S. russowii*, not so far recorded from the British Isles, is *S. rubiginosum*. It has stem leaves like those of *S. girgensohnii*, most fascicles with 3 spreading branches, has some red pigmentation, and hence might have been overlooked in the field as *S. russowii*.

Habitat

A species of sites that are moderately enriched with nutrients, often found in wooded mires, flushed grassy and rocky banks, on moors, in woodland and occasionally on bogs. Also found on humid, north-east- to north-west-facing heather-dominated banks.