

*Sphagnum subnitens* var. *subnitens*

Lustrous Bog-moss

Section Acutifolia



Stem leaves



## Identification

Forms moderately dense cushions and small hummocks. The capitula are usually less than 2 cm in diameter, much smaller in dry or exposed sites. The outer branches of the capitula and upper stem branches are long, making shoots look top-heavy. In denser cushions, these branches turn upwards and grow over the capitulum centre. Fascicles usually have only 1 pendent and 2 spreading branches and are closely spaced; the branches tangled and hiding the stem. Spreading branch leaves are not in straight lines. Capitula usually show some differentiation, often very distinct, between a green centre and pinkish outer branches. Some plants can be very dingy, but still retain this colour contrast. Stem leaves are large, up to twice as long as wide, rather variable in shape, but always acute, usually with a pinched, sharp tip; the whole leaf may appear distinctly triangular. Capsules are common.

## Similar species

The salmon-pink colour (when present), top-heavy, untidy looking shoots and the sharp tip to the stem leaf distinguish *S. subnitens* from other species in Section Acutifolia. Some plants have well-developed pink colouration, similar to other Acutifolia species, for example *S. capillifolium* (p. 288), though still with a greenish capitulum centre, but on closer examination will be seen to retain the typical form of *S. subnitens*. Extreme all-brown plants may be the rare var. *ferrugineum* (Smith, p. 71). *S. skyense* (p. 292) is usually larger, is vividly pinkish-red, has many fascicles with 2 pendent branches, branch leaves partly in straight lines, and stem leaves broad relative to their length. Also see *S. molle* (p. 293).

## Habitat

Boggy grassland, marshes, fens, flushes, ditches, wet woodland, and humid, rocky banks under heather. In the north and west, also found on blanket bogs.