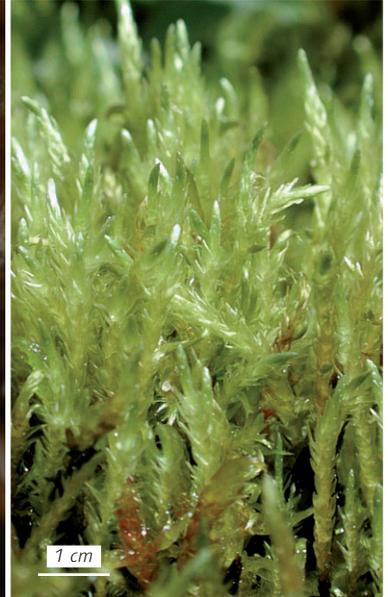
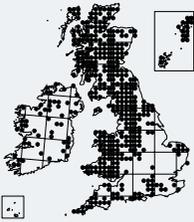


*Straminergon stramineum**Calliergon stramineum*

Straw Spear-moss

Key 348



**Identification** *S. stramineum* often grows as scattered stems among other vegetation or forms lax tufts or patches. Shoots are pale green (never reddish) and medium-sized, commonly 2–8 cm long, but sometimes more, and hardly branched. They have a string-like appearance because the leaves are slightly concave and overlap each other (though not always closely). The leaves are broadly or narrowly egg-shaped, about 1 mm wide, with a rounded tip, and have a long, single nerve extending well above mid-leaf, sometimes nearly to the tip. A distinct patch of cells in the basal corners of the leaves does not extend all the way to the nerve; this can be seen with a good hand lens on leaves pulled from the stem. A very useful field character is the occasional presence of rhizoids developing from the back of the leaves near the tip. However, these are not always present. Capsules are rare.

**Similar species** Few other mosses occur as erect, string-like shoots in boggy ground. Weak forms of *Calliergon cordifolium* (p. 719) may resemble *S. stramineum*, but its stem leaves are rarely much less than 2 mm wide, and they have patches of cells that extend across the leaf base all the way to the nerve, and are not very sharply differentiated. *Warnstorfia sarmentosa* (p. 715) nearly always develops red colours, the leaves often terminate in a small, short, abrupt point, and it does not develop rhizoids at the leaf tip. *Pseudocalliergon trifarium* (p. 727) is more robust, strongly coloured deep green to yellow-brown, and the stem leaves are only slightly longer than wide.

**Habitat** *S. stramineum* is widespread in wet, acidic habitats, occurring in bogs, rush (*Juncus*) flushes, and among heathy vegetation. It is often, but by no means always associated with species of *Sphagnum*, and sometimes occurs on moist banks among grass and heather.