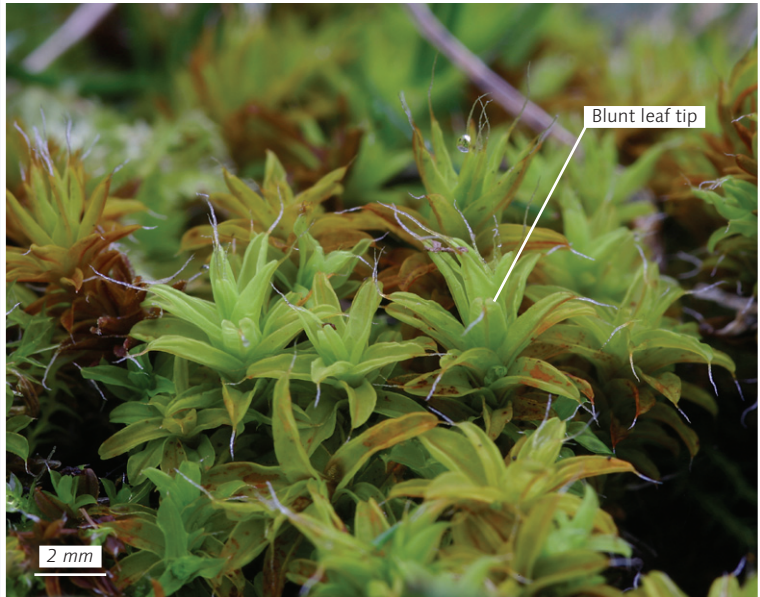
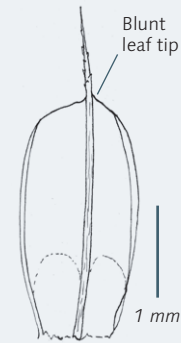
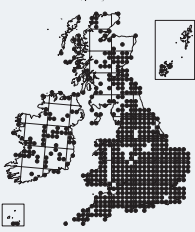


*Syntrichia ruralis* subsp. *ruralis**Tortula ruralis*

Great Hairy Screw-moss

Key 122

**Identification**

This moss forms bright, golden green, loose cushions, or more extensive, sometimes rather dense turfs 1–2 cm tall. The leaves are normally between 4 and 6 mm long, strongly curved away from the stem when moist, giving the shoot a star-like appearance, and become twisted when dry. Individual leaves are somewhat tongue-shaped, with a rounded tip and parallel or slightly convex sides which are recurved almost to the tip. The nerve is excurrent in a long, silvery, toothed hair point. The cylindrical capsules are rare.

**Similar species**

*S. ruralis* subsp. *ruraliformis* (p. 495) may occur with subsp. *ruralis*, and has a tapering rather than blunt leaf tip. *S. intermedia* (p. 496) is usually smaller, does not have leaves that curve so strongly away from the stem when moist, has leaves that contract in the middle, and its leaf margins are only recurved in the lower part. The extremely rare, montane *S. norvegica* (Smith, p. 382) has a red hair point.

**Habitat**

This common moss grows on calcareous substrates on walls, rocks and sandy ground. It is also a characteristic species of old thatch.