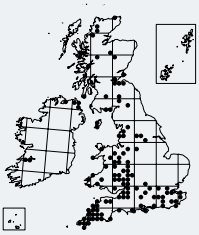
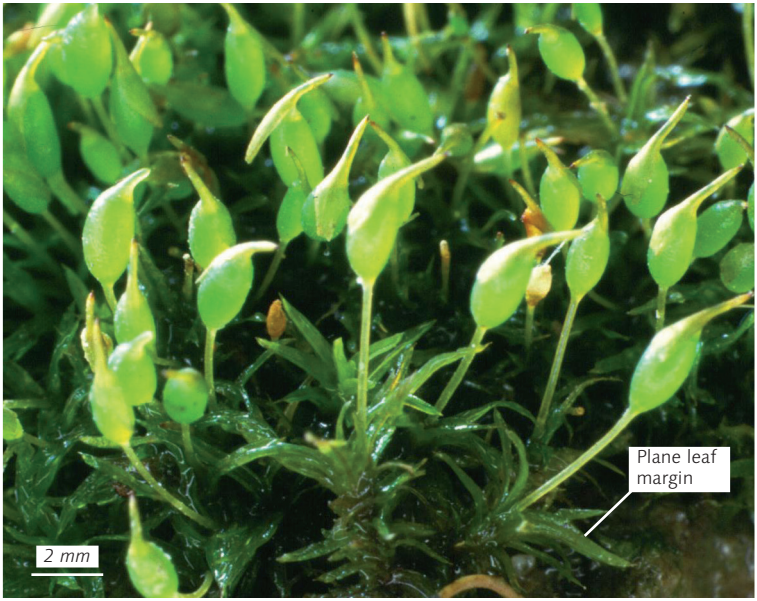
Weissia rutilans

Pointed-leaved Stubble-moss





Identification *W. rutilans* combines characters of our two commonest *Weissia* species: the peristome teeth of *W. controversa* and the plane leaf margins of some forms of *W. brachycarpa*. Ripe capsules are essential for identification, especially as spores provide a confirmatory feature, so identification is only possible in spring. It has the same growth form as *W. controversa*, i.e. scattered plants forming open carpets on soil, 3–10 mm tall, with leaves 1.5–2 mm long or slightly more.

Similar species Easily confused with *W. controversa* (p. 422) owing to the peristome teeth and wide capsule mouth, but the plane leaf margins are distinctive. *W. squarrosa* (p. 424) and some forms of *W. brachycarpa* (p. 423) have plane margins, but both have narrow mouths covered by a membrane. Do not be tempted to identify non-fertile acrocarps with plane leaf margins as *W. rutilans* – they won't be!

Habitat A plant of damp, bare soil, including pastures, cereal stubble fields, ditchsides, river banks and woodland rides, several of which are habitats in which *W. brachycarpa* also grows. There are also a few records from upland flushes and ledges, but *W. rutilans* is less frequent than *W. controversa* in the uplands.

Photo Jan-Peter Frahm Text Sam Bosanquet