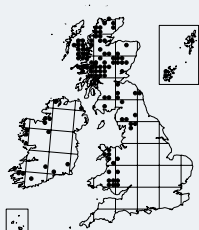


Schistidium strictum

Upright Brown Grimmia



Identification The orange colour of the older leaves of *S. strictum* is different from typical forms of other British *Schistidium* species, although *S. apocarpum* may sometimes be orange. *S. strictum* also differs from other species in having leaves with a wide base that suddenly contracts to a narrow upper part, unlike the gradually tapering leaves of other species. Characteristically, loose tufts of shoots several centimetres long sprawl on steep, calcareous sandstone faces; sometimes it grows as denser tufts on boulders. Lower leaves are about 1.75 mm long; those surrounding the capsule are 2.5 mm long.

Similar species Orange-toned *S. apocarpum* (p. 510) can only be excluded microscopically, although its leaves are wider when the two species are compared. Great care needs to be taken with checking microscopically for small bumps on the leaf blade, as those of *S. strictum* tend to be sparse and low. The rarer *S. papillosum* (Smith, p. 410) has long, narrow capsules. *S. pruinatum* (p. 514) has broader leaves, and *S. confertum* (p. 517) is never orange. Small forms of *S. strictum* with wavy hair points appear very similar to *S. flexipile* (one recent British record; Smith, p. 426), which differs in its wide leaves surrounding the capsule; these leaves contrast with the narrower leaves below. Under a microscope, the leaves of *S. flexipile* lack small bumps on the cells.

Habitat *S. strictum* typically favours exposed rock faces on upland crags of calcareous sandstone, schist or igneous rock. It also sometimes grows on sandstone boulders or on rock faces in gorges and gullies. *S. strictum* seldom colonizes limestone and *S. papillosum* is the more usual *Schistidium* of upland limestone with small bumps on the leaf blade.