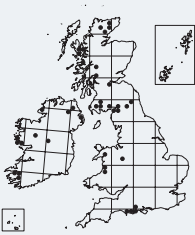


*Sphagnum pulchrum*

Golden Bog-moss

Section Cuspidata



Stem leaf



**Identification** A medium- to large-sized species. Growing in carpets, occasionally extensive and usually very conspicuous. Colour is bright golden orange, yellow-brown or chestnut, but can be green. In the spring, after lengthy inundation, colour can be a dull, dirty green. Branches are mostly straight, short and fat, tapering to the tip and base. Branch leaves are conspicuously in straight lines, concave and pointed, those in the basal two-thirds of branches spreading at 45°. Stem colour is yellow-brown to brown, darker than the branch leaves. Stem leaves are triangular, pendent or spreading, with a distinct point or cusp at the tip. Capsules are unknown in Britain and Ireland.

**Similar species** A very distinctive species because of its bright colour and strikingly neat appearance, with branch leaves in obvious straight lines. If in any doubt, the dark stem distinguishes it from forms of the widespread *S. fallax* (p. 306) that have branch leaves in straight lines. The triangular stem leaf distinguishes it from the rare *S. lindbergii* (p. 310).

**Habitat** Occurs in pools and hollows in bogs and valley mires, and in acidic flushes. Widespread, but very local; commonest on Dorset heaths.