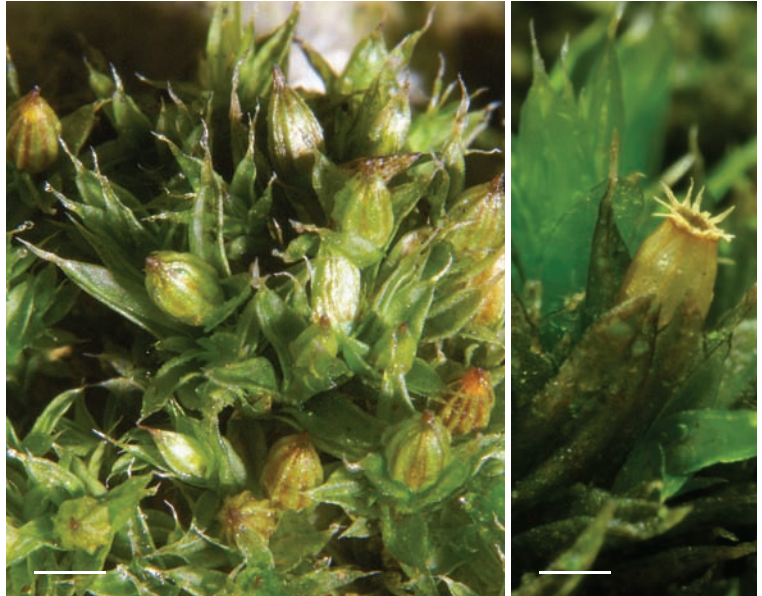


Orthotrichum diaphanum

White-tipped Bristle-moss



Identification The white leaf tips of *O. diaphanum* are immediately diagnostic within the genus and make this very common species look more like a *Schistidium* than an *Orthotrichum*. It grows in small tufts of narrow, upright shoots, usually clustered around a sporophyte. Unripe capsules are covered by a hairless, light green calyptra, whilst ripe capsules are light brown and are slightly furrowed when old and dry. The 16 light brown peristome teeth are reflexed when dry.

Similar species Confusion with other *Orthotrichum* species is unlikely because of the white leaf tips. Most other mosses with hair points have their capsules on relatively long setae, so confusion is only really likely with *Schistidium* species (pp. 000–000). These are usually taller, straggly, branched plants, which have small calyptrae that scarcely sheath the capsule, and red or orange peristome teeth.

Habitat A very common epiphyte in lowland Britain, especially on elders, but also on willows (especially by streams) and other trees. Nutrient-rich bark is favoured, so *O. diaphanum* is actually rather scarce in those parts of the country without intensive agriculture. This is a particularly common plant in town centres, where it is just as much at home on concrete, rocks, brick walls and other inorganic structures, and it grows in similar situations in farmyards in the open countryside. Even on remote moorland it is possible to find *O. diaphanum* on concrete gate posts, which probably indicates that they are regular bird perches.