

# Common Haircap Moss

*Polytrichum commune*

Plants · Present all year · capsules Jun-Sep



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A large, robust moss forming deep dark-green cushions and carpets of upright unbranched stems set with stiff, narrow, spreading leaves that give a starry look from above. Spore capsules are held on long reddish stalks and capped with a shaggy golden hood. Common haircap grows on bogs, wet heath, moorland and damp acid woodland throughout the region.

## BEHAVIOUR

Unlike most mosses it has specialised conducting tissue in the stem that moves water internally, which is how it manages to grow so tall — stems can exceed thirty centimetres in wet ground. The hairy cap that gives it its name is a remnant of the female tissue, carried up as the capsule grows. Haircap carpets are an important component of peat-forming bog vegetation.

## WHEN TO SEE IT

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## QUICK FACTS

|        |                                             |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|
| FAMILY | Haircap mosses (Polytrichaceae)             |
| HEIGHT | 5-40 cm · among the tallest mosses          |
| STATUS | Native; abundant on bog and wet acid ground |

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