

DWARF SPIKE-RUSH

Dwarf Spike-Rush is a tiny plant which grows immersed in the estuarine mud, below Mean High Water, just downstream of the bridge at Aveton Gifford. The plant appears as tufts of dark green stems with tiny dingy flower spikes at the ends of each stem. The tufts are connected by runners below the mud surface and grows from a tuber which is J-shaped or horseshoe-shaped, a characteristic that helps in identification of the species. Visible only to a careful searcher, the plant is very significant in the UK context (although it is common in N America and Eurasia) and has been seen by very few people; it is listed in the Red Data Book – a register of threatened wildlife species and is protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act which protects this plant against intentional picking, uprooting and destruction. This site is believed to be the only one in South Devon.



The plant is a perennial herb growing tufts of spongy, compressible stems not more than 10 centimeters tall. The inflorescence is an oval-shaped spikelet just 2 or 3 millimeters long, made up of several tiny flowers.