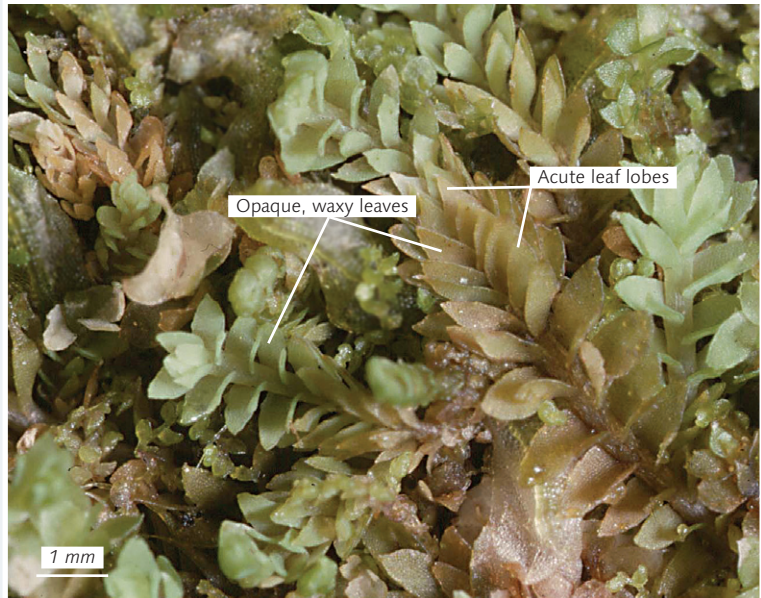
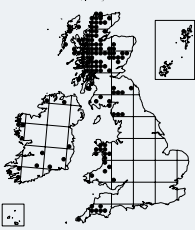


Douinia ovata

Waxy Earwort



Identification This small liverwort (shoots less than 2 mm wide) looks rather like a *Scapania* and has a distinctive, pale green, opaque, rather waxy colour. Leaves are up to 1 mm long, with lobes more acute than those of almost any British *Scapania* species. The margins are untoothed, unlike most *Scapania* species. Gemmae are absent. Dry plants curl slightly up and away from the substrate, but are not much different in appearance from moist plants. *D. ovata* tends to grow in small, discrete patches that grow out from a central point.

Similar species The pointed leaves are strongly reminiscent of *Scapania umbrosa* (p. 171), but that often has red gemmae, with the tips of its leaves and shoot curving down towards the substrate, and usually grows in neat patches of parallel plants. The rare *S. gymnostomophila* (Paton, p. 349) is similar in size, but has a blunter front lobe that is held parallel to the back lobe, and clusters of brown gemmae. The leaves of *Anastrophyllum minutum* (p. 132) are more symmetrical, with shorter, less pointed lobes and it is usually a brown or green plant. *Sphenolobopsis pearsonii* (p. 131) has similarly sharp leaf lobes, but that is a tiny brown plant with symmetrical leaves. The much commoner *Diplophyllum albicans* (p. 166) has round tips to its leaf lobes and a band of colourless cells in the middle of each lobe.

Habitat *D. ovata* grows in a wide range of humid, base-poor habitats. These include rock outcrops in woodland, upland crags, holes in scree or tors, or the sides of mossy boulders in ravines. It also grows on bark in Atlantic woodlands, usually on the trunks of birch (*Betula*), oak (*Quercus*) or rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Rarely it is found on peat, a substrate more typical of *Scapania umbrosa*.