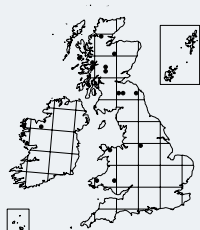


Fossombronia fimbriata

Fragile Frillwort



Identification *F. fimbriata* forms tiny, hemispherical blobs less than 3.5 mm long. The leaves are pale yellow-green and divided into highly dissected, linear terminal branches that give the plants a uniquely fluffy appearance. The rhizoids are purple, as usual in this genus. *F. fimbriata* is dioicous, and capsules are extremely rare.

Similar species The main difficulty in identifying *F. fimbriata* lies in detecting the tiny plants in the first place, especially as populations usually consist of a few scattered individuals which may be partly overgrown by filamentous algae. Once spotted they are not likely to be confused with any other bryophyte, although *Equisetum* gametophytes are superficially similar, but do not have purple rhizoids.

Habitat This very scarce species is so easily overlooked that it is perhaps commoner in the north and west than existing records suggest. It grows on gravelly roadsides or pathsides, on damp soil at the edge of streams and lakes and on cattle-trampled ground where livestock tracks meet streams on upland-edge grazing land. It is often accompanied by other *Fossombronia* species, especially *F. incurva* and *F. wondraczekii*.