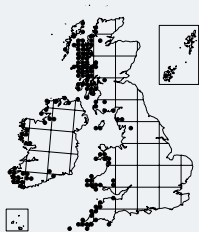


Frullania microphylla

Lesser Scalegwort



Identification A small (shoots 0.5–1.2 mm wide), very dark, usually virtually black, subpinnately branched, strongly aromatic leafy liverwort. The leaves are not usually deciduous (except in the very rare var. *deciduiifolia*, in which both lobes of the leaf are shed together), and consist of rounded lobes up to 0.5 mm wide and 0.7 mm long, with small, pocket-shaped lobules. Leaf lobes have modified cells similar to those of *F. tamarisci* (p. 211) in a more or less continuous line from the base of the lobe, frequently accompanied by scattered modified cells (visible with a hand lens). Underleaves are scarcely wider than the stem, and are deeply and narrowly divided into 2 narrow lobes with plane margins.

Similar species The leaves of *F. fragilifolia* (p. 215) also have modified cells, but these are more often scattered than arranged in a line from the base; the underleaves are different, and the lobes and lobules come off separately when the leaves are shed. *F. fragilifolia* is our only other scented *Frullania*. *F. tamarisci* (p. 211) has a pointed lobe with a line of modified cells, and the margins of the underleaves often recurved. *F. teneriffae* (p. 212) and *F. dilatata* (p. 213) are larger, and lack modified cells in the leaf lobes.

Habitat *F. microphylla* grows in widely spreading patches closely appressed to the substrate, usually on rock where there is some base enrichment. On seashores, *F. microphylla* grows on rocks lower down the shore than does *F. fragilifolia*. Occasionally it is found in upland areas, especially in south-west Ireland. *F. microphylla* var. *deciduiifolia* is confined to calcareous, montane rock faces.