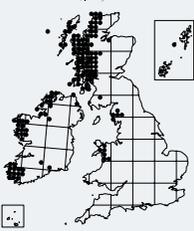


Herbertus aduncus subsp. *hutchinsiae*

Juniper Prongwort



Identification *H. aduncus* can easily be mistaken for a moss because of its very narrow, curved leaves, but with a hand lens the leaves can be seen to be deeply 2-pronged and borne in 3 almost equal-sized rows on the stem. The plants are large, ascending or erect, up to 20 cm tall and usually reddish or orange-tinged, more rarely green. Leaves are 1–2.3 mm long. The leaf base is narrow, and the leaf lobes are very finely pointed and spread horizontally rather untidily. Small-leaved branches often grow on older parts of the stem. Fertile plants are very rare, and capsules have not been found in the British Isles.

Similar species No other genus of liverworts has deeply 2-pronged leaves. *H. stramineus* (p. 74) is smaller in size, dirty brown (never bright red or orange) and its leaves are more erect and closely overlapping, with shorter points somewhat spreading, but not horizontally. *H. borealis* (p. 76) is equally robust, but usually more yellow-tinged than red, and with the leaf base much broader, lobes shorter and broader and much more regularly and neatly curved to one side.

Habitat *H. aduncus* is very conspicuous in oceanic-montane liverwort heaths where it can form large, orange-red patches amongst ling heather (*Calluna*) and other dwarf shrubs on rocky slopes, cliff ledges and in corries, often facing north to east, and sometimes on rocky banks of wooded ravines (where plants may be green), less commonly at low altitudes. It is normally found on acidic substrates.