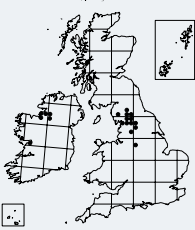


Pedinophyllum interruptum

Craven Featherwort



Identification

This uncommon liverwort often occurs as scattered, prostrate shoots 1–3 mm wide, but can form substantial patches where conditions are favourable. Its shoots may be various shades of green and resemble a small to medium-sized *Plagiochila*. However, the leaves mainly tilt slightly forwards of the stem rather than backwards as in *Plagiochila*. Leaves may be rounded or oblong, approximately 1.5 mm wide and long, and may have a tooth at each corner. The centre of the front surface of the stem has a narrow, leaf-free zone, so the leaves are relatively well-separated. This species is monoicous; its specific epithet refers to the way in which male inflorescences appear to form a constriction round the stem that interrupts the regular pattern of alternate leaves. Plants are usually fertile, but rarely form sporophytes.

Similar species

Small forms of *Plagiochila porelloides* (p. 193) with rounded leaves and no teeth are likely to be confused with *P. interruptum*, but the front leaf insertion reaches the midline of the stem, whereas *P. interruptum* has a clear, leaf-free zone. The very rare *Jungermannia leiantha* (*Liochlaena lanceolata*) (Paton, p. 265) differs in having its leaves inserted onto the midline of the stem's upper surface, and perianths very suddenly contracted to a short, narrow beak in a shallow depression.

Habitat

P. interruptum usually grows on or near Carboniferous or metamorphic limestone, both on the rock itself or on soil, in wooded gorges or in very humid, sheltered sites in the uplands. Pioneering stems creeping across a bare, limestone rock face are particularly striking, but *P. interruptum* can also tolerate deep shade, maintaining a relatively normal growth form even in dark recesses.