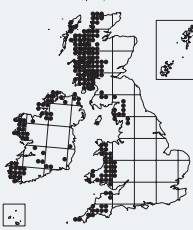


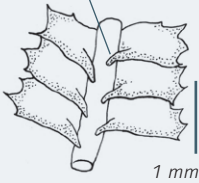
Plagiochila punctata

Spotty Featherwort

Key 76



Leaf base hardly runs down onto stem



Identification *P. punctata* typically grows in small, dense, pale yellow-green to yellow-brown tufts. Shoots are up to 3 mm wide, and leaves are up to about 1.5 mm long and wide. Leaves are alternate, often at least as broad as long and then look rounded. The tip and back margin of the leaf usually have several spiny teeth, but the tip may be truncated with only 2 teeth, especially on depauperate plants. The front margin of the leaf is entire and at the base hardly runs down onto the stem, with a short, oblique insertion line. Leaves often fall off early, leaving bare stems. Plants are aromatic when crushed. *P. punctata* is dioicous, but fertile plants are rarely encountered.

Similar species The base of the front margin of the leaf also hardly runs down onto the stem in *P. exigua* (p. 199), but *P. exigua* has a much narrower leaf insertion. Small plants of *P. spinulosa* (p. 194) differ in having the base of the front margin of the leaf extending well down onto the stem, and the leaves tend to be longer. *Leptoscyphus cuneifolius* (p. 182) is superficially similar to depauperate forms of *P. punctata*, but has toothless, wedge-shaped leaves with a narrow leaf base.

Habitat *P. punctata* forms small clumps on trees and rocks near streams in Atlantic woodland. Patches may develop into characteristic brackets that look like miniature, thatched, lean-to roofs. It also grows in deep, permanently humid clefts of rock on tors in the uplands.