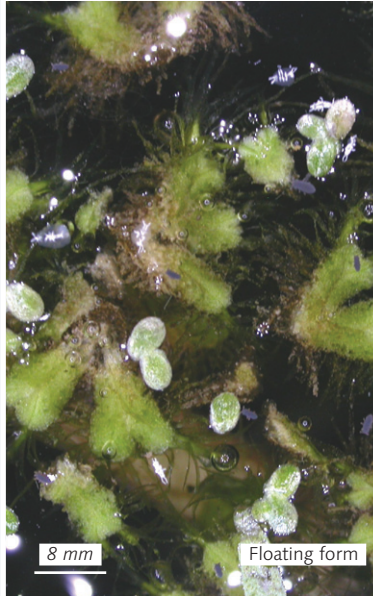
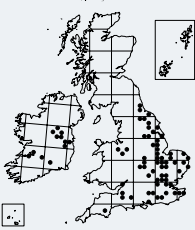


Ricciocarpus natans

Fringed Heartwort



Identification This small thallose liverwort has both floating and terrestrial forms. Floating plants consist of small, yellow-green to dark green or reddish-tinged, duckweed (*Lemna*)-like rosettes 5–15 mm diameter. Thalli have a conspicuous fringe of violet, spreading ventral scales with a finely toothed margin protruding from beneath the lobes. The heart-shaped thalli branch regularly in a Y-like fashion, with each branch of a pair approximately equal in size to its twin branch, and each thallus ending in 2 broadly rounded lobes. Inconspicuous dots (air pores) lie on the upper surface, surrounded by lines arranged in a delicate network. Terrestrial plants are often more pigmented, with much smaller ventral scales than in floating plants. *R. natans* is only known non-fertile in the British Isles, unlike most *Riccia* species.

Similar species Floating forms are more likely to be confused with the vascular plant duckweed (*Lemna*) at first glance, but duckweeds are smooth, and lack ventral scales. Floating *Riccia* species (*Riccia fluitans*, p. 261, and *Riccia rhenana*, Paton, p. 583) have narrow, linear thalli about 1 mm wide. Terrestrial forms could be confused with *Riccia cavernosa* (p. 263) and *Riccia crystallina* (p. 262), but those species lack a median groove or have one only at the branch tips, and the upper thallus surface soon disintegrates and becomes conspicuously spongy. *Riccia huebeneriana* (p. 264, which has grooved branches like *R. natans*) differs in its narrow, usually reddish branches and older parts becoming spongy.

Habitat This southern species is found floating in mineral-rich pools, ditches, canals and drains, sometimes on slow-flowing streams, often where the water is calcareous, or on mud at the water's edge.