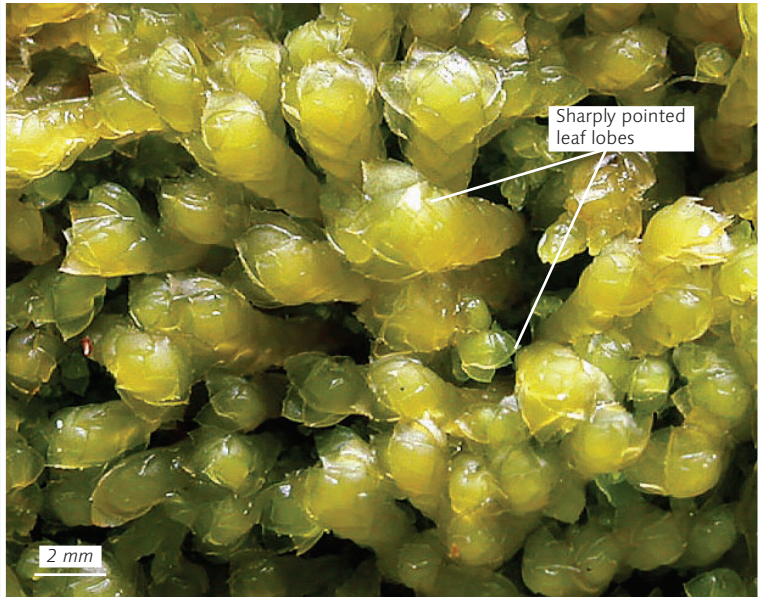
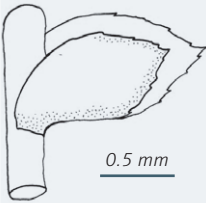
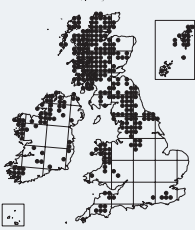


# *Scapania umbrosa*

Shady Earwort

Key 34



**Identification** This small (shoots 1–2.5 mm wide), very pale green or brownish liverwort has narrow, sharply pointed leaf lobes less than 1.5 mm long, and red gemmae. It grows in flat patches on logs or bark, and typical forms have the lobe tips curved downwards towards the substrate. The leaf margins are toothed, a character that is clearly visible with a  $\times 20$  hand lens.

**Similar species** *S. umbrosa* is most often confused with young plants of *S. gracilis* (p. 180), which also occur in woodland in western Britain. *S. gracilis* always has parallel-sided front leaf lobes, and its green gemmae can usually be found. *Douinia ovata* (p. 165) is a similarly pale green, and has pointed leaf lobes, but lacks gemmae and has untoothed leaf margins. *Anastrophyllum hellerianum* (p. 133), *Lophozia longidens* (p. 118), and *Tritomaria exsecta* and *T. exsectiformis* (p. 138) grow on logs and have red gemmae, but each has its own distinctly different leaf shape and none has toothed margins.

**Habitat** A locally common species in the most oceanic parts of western Britain, and very rare in the south. *S. umbrosa* most often grows on decaying logs with *Nowellia curvifolia* and a range of other liverworts, but is also quite frequently found on soft, acidic rock or on humus-rich soil banks. In the uplands it occasionally grows on damp, bare peat on moorlands or in bogs.