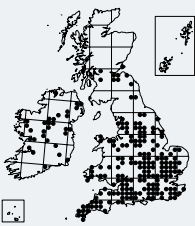


Aphanorrhagma patens

Physcomitrella patens

Spreading Earth-moss



Identification The very short setae of *A. patens* mean that its spherical capsules, which do not shed their lid, are partly hidden among its lax-celled leaves. The lax cells are easily visible through a hand lens, as are the teeth on the leaf margins. Shoots are up to 2.5 mm tall, with leaves about 2 mm long.

Similar species *Physcomitrium* (pp. 565–566), *Entosthodon* (pp. 562–564) and *Funaria* (p. 561) species have similarly lax leaf cells, but the capsules are held clear of the shoots on a relatively long seta. *Phascum cuspidatum* (p. 486) has sessile capsules like *A. patens*, but its leaf cells are much smaller, giving the leaves a more opaque appearance. Non-fertile *Tortula truncata* (p. 482) and related species also have more opaque leaves. Most *Bryum* species (pp. 581–599) have more pointed leaves with smaller cells not so easily visible with a hand lens. Species of *Ephemerum* (pp. 503–504) are very much smaller plants.

Habitat An early colonist of bare mud at the margins of reservoirs, pools and rivers.