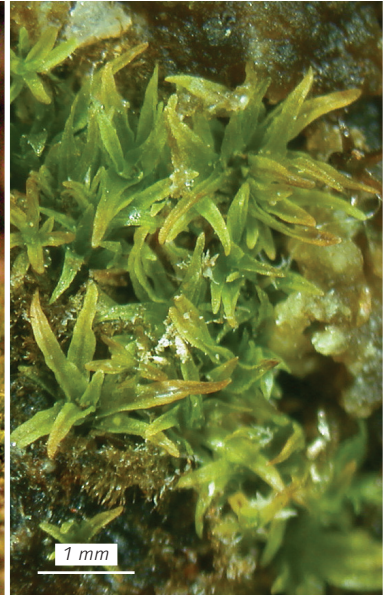
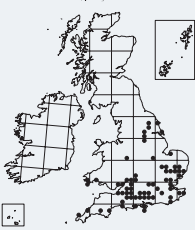


Leptobarbula berica

Beric Beard-moss



Identification Minute, bright green plants, up to 2 mm in height, found as scattered stems or loose patches, frequently mixed with other species. The leaves are up to 1 mm long (or slightly longer at the tip of the shoot) and taper slightly to a rounded tip, but this is not very obvious with a hand lens because the leaf tip is very narrow. The leaves are often recurved and somewhat wavy with a spidery appearance, and hardly altered when dry. The leaves surrounding the base of the seta are much longer, with a broader, sheathing base. The erect, cylindrical capsules are rare.

Similar species *L. berica* is easily confused with numerous small or immature forms of other species that grow in the same habitat. Fully formed *Gyroweisia tenuis* (p. 448) is similar in size to *L. berica*, and also favours similar habitats, but its leaves are usually shorter relative to their width. *Gymnostomum* species (pp. 449–451) form denser patches. *Tortella* species (pp. 428–432) and *Didymodon sinuosus* (p. 464) are bigger when fully formed, and the tip of the leaves is less blunt.

Habitat Found typically on sheltered limestone (especially oolitic) rocks and loose stones in woodland, but also on limestone stonework in churchyards, mortar and brickwork. A particularly favoured habitat is the face of masonry of walls backed by earth, for example retaining walls of bridges.