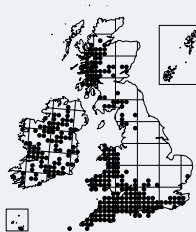


*Neckera pumila*

Dwarf Neckera

Key 290



**Identification** The branches of *N. pumila* are sometimes appressed to the mossy bark of the trees and shrubs on which it grows, but more frequently project outwards in typical *Neckera* fashion. It is the smallest of the British and Irish species (stems less than 4 cm and leaves less than 2 mm long); its leaves are undulate like those of *N. crista*, but taper more gradually at the tip. It occasionally produces thread-like branches with tiny leaves which are mixed with normal branches, and also fruits occasionally.

**Similar species** *N. pumila* is the only moss with undulate leaves which is at all frequent on the bark of living trees. *N. crista* (p. 680) is a much larger plant and seldom grows on trees. There is one very old record of *N. pennata* (Smith, p. 720) growing on bark in north-eastern Scotland. *N. pennata* looks like a luxuriant *N. pumila*, differing in having leaves that taper gradually from the base, and in producing abundant capsules on a very short seta, so are more or less hidden by the leaves around the base of the setae.

**Habitat** *N. pumila* grows on trees and shrubs in sheltered woods and scrub. It is especially frequent on ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and willow (*Salix*), but also grows on a wide range of other hosts.