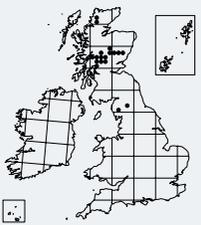
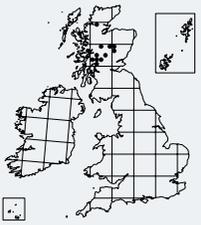


Oncophorus virens/wahlenbergii

Green/Wahlenberg's Spur-moss

*O. virens**O. virens**O. wahlenbergii**O. wahlenbergii**O. virens**O. wahlenbergii*

Identification

O. virens grows in rather soft, yellow-green cushions or patches up to 10 cm deep. The leaves are 3–5 mm long, crisped when dry, spreading and sometimes reflexed when moist, and often spirally arranged around the stem when viewed from above. The base of the leaf hardly sheathes the stem and one or both of the leaf margins are recurved below; above this the leaf tapers to a long, fine point which may have a few teeth. Capsules are normally present, curved and inclined, 2–3 times longer than wide and distinctly swollen at the base. *O. wahlenbergii* is very similar, but has a shorter capsule (about 1.5 times longer than wide), plane leaf margins and a more distinctly sheathing base to the leaf, but microscopical confirmation is often necessary.

Similar species

Tortella tortuosa (p. 428) is superficially similar, and also occurs in damp, calcareous places, but its leaf base has an oblique line between the colourless and green cells, and it seldom produces capsules. *Trichostomum hibernicum* (p. 436) also has leaves that sheath the stem, but very rarely produces capsules. Microscopically, its leaf cells appear roughened. *Cynodontium jeneri* (p. 359) is darker and holds its capsules erect. *Didymodon insulanus* (p. 463) is a lowland moss, and very rarely produces capsules. Neither *Dicranella cerviculata* (p. 370) nor *D. subulata* (Smith, p. 192) grow on calcareous ground.

Habitat

O. virens is a scarce moss, usually growing in damp grassland by base-rich flushes or below calcareous crags. It may also occur on wet ledges and in turfs of bryophytes on boulders in montane burns with a lime-rich run-off. *O. wahlenbergii* occurs in similarly wet, flushed, calcareous habitats as *O. virens*, but seems to be much rarer. There are several records from flushed, stony ground on or just above bealachs (saddles) on exposed, montane ridges.