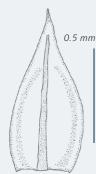
## Pseudoleskea patens

Lescuraea patens

Patent Leskea







Identification The very slender (2–3 mm wide and 3–4 cm long), creeping and irregularly branched shoots form dark green or brownish patches. Its oval leaves are about 1 mm long, with the nerve ending well below the tip, and are held away from the stem when moist. Dry plants hold their leaves appressed to the stem. Capsules are rare, and form in spring and summer. They are egg-shaped, slightly curved, and held erect or at an angle to the vertical.

Similar species The even rarer P. incurvata (Smith, p. 740) is very similar, but its leaves all curve and point in one direction when moist, and taper towards the tip which forms a hook. In P. incurvata the nerve ends in the leaf tip. Like P. patens, P. incurvata occurs in baserich or calcareous habitats in the mountains, but may also grow in sheltered lowland sites, such as on rocky banks in lowland ravines. Pseudoleskeella catenulata (p. 690) is smaller, and forms more compact, olive or dark green or brownish-yellow patches. The very rare Lescuraea saxicola (Smith, p. 741) is olive or light green, with closely appressed and overlapping, concave leaves that are slightly pleated longitudinally. It grew on calcareous mica-schist rocks on two mountains in the central Scottish Highlands at altitudes higher than 700 m, but has not been seen in Britain since 1911. Leskea polycarpa (p. 689) grows mainly on bark in the flood zone of lowland watercourses.

Habitat P. patens most usually grows on mica-schist, limestone rocks or on base-rich soil in the mountains, often in sheltered gullies and rocky banks on cliffs. Another habitat is acidic or base-rich rocks in block scree where snow lies late in the year.