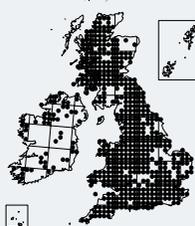


Tetraphis pellucida

Pellucid Four-tooth Moss

Key 226, 269



Identification Forms rather short (up to 1.5 cm), upright tufts or loose, wide patches composed of slender, delicate, individual shoots. Moist patches are yellow-green, but they take on a slightly bluish-green metallic sheen when dry. The leaves are held away from the stem when moist – the lower leaves are 1 mm or a little longer, circular to egg-shaped, often irregularly shaped and distant, those above are up to 2 mm long, more crowded, narrowly egg-shaped – and have a shortly pointed tip and plane, entire margins. The nerve ends well below the tip. Non-fertile shoot tips often have gemma cups formed from larger, crowded leaves, within which sit many disc-shaped gemmae. Fertile shoots have longer, narrower, more densely set leaves and are distinct in appearance. Cylindrical capsules, on a seta to about 15 mm long, are uncommon, but may be locally frequent. The peristome of only 4 triangular teeth is very distinctive.

Similar species *Aulacomnium androgynum* (p. 627) has a ball of gemmae at the top of a stalk rather than held in a cup. *T. pellucida* sometimes has attenuated shoot tips with small gemma cups, and then may be mistaken for *A. androgynum*. The 4-toothed peristome is shared only by *Tetradontium* species (p. 334), which do not have upright, leafy shoots. In the absence of sporophytes or gemma cups, it is most likely to be mistaken for a *Bryum* (pp. 581–599) or *Pohlia* (pp. 603–611) species, but differs from *Bryum* in its more shortly rounded to egg-shaped leaves, from *Pohlia* in the lack of a distinct apical notch, and from both in the absence of a central thickened area or midrib.

Habitat A species of dry but usually humid, acidic substrates, more frequently found on well-rotted stumps and wood. It sometimes grows on living trees, particularly in wet alder (*Alnus*) woodland, more rarely on purple moor-grass (*Molinia*) tussocks and peaty woodland banks. It may also be frequent to abundant on sheltered Millstone Grit in woodlands, where populations consisting largely of protonemal flaps occur in damp, deep shade.