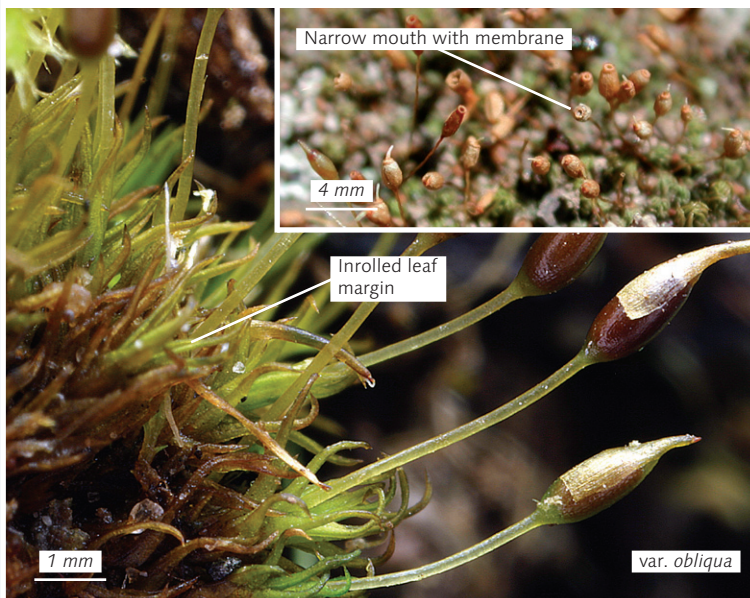
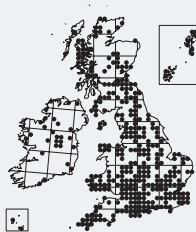


Weissia brachycarpa

W. microstoma

Small-mouthed Beardless-moss

Key 247



Identification

This is the second most common British *Weissia* and, like *W. controversa*, it is a variable plant that grows either as scattered plants or in dense patches up to 1 cm tall, with leaves 1.75–2.75 mm long, in a range of habitats. The key feature is the small mouth to the cylindrical capsule. This stands up from the body of the capsule and is closed by a membrane. Var. *brachycarpa* has plane leaf margins; the commoner var. *obliqua* has them inrolled.

Similar species

The narrow mouth covered by a membrane rules out *W. controversa* (p. 422) and *W. rutilans* (p. 421). *W. squarrosa* (p. 424) has distinctive, short-leaved shoots growing out of its patches, which are lacking in *W. brachycarpa*. Plants in dry, calcareous habitats should be checked microscopically for the scarce *W. condensata* (Smith, p. 269), which grows in loose, much-branched patches and has wide nerves.

Habitat

W. brachycarpa var. *obliqua* has a greater affinity for disturbed, calcareous soil than *W. controversa*. Typical habitats include paths across calcareous grasslands, the floors of disused limestone quarries, surfaced woodland rides and flower beds. Var. *brachycarpa* is less of a calcicole and, like *W. rutilans*, favours damp ground. Most recent records are from stubble fields, but there are a few from woodland rides and damp road verges.