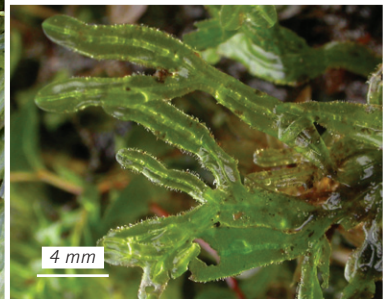
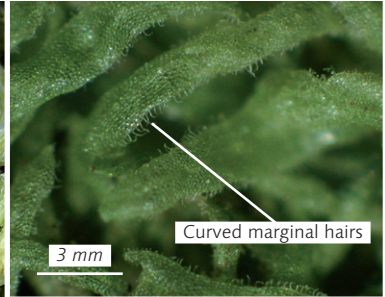
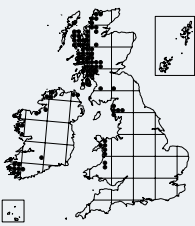


Metzgeria leptoneura

Hooked Veilwort



Identification This is much the rarest of the British *Metzgeria* species. Its interwoven wefts of thalli stick out perpendicularly from the rock faces on which they grow. Thalli grow up to 3 mm wide, and several centimetres long. Each thallus is strikingly tubular, thanks to its strongly down-curved margins, and edged by rows of curved, double hairs. *M. leptoneura* is dioicous, and only female plants are known in Britain.

Similar species Only *M. conjugata* (p. 247) looks somewhat similar to *M. leptoneura*, but it is less striking in almost every way: *M. conjugata* forms patches that are arranged loosely across rock surfaces, with only moderately down-curved thallus margins, and straight marginal hairs.

Habitat Finding *M. leptoneura* is always exciting, because it is largely restricted to the best humid gorges and woodlands of northern and western Britain. It grows on damp faces of acidic or calcareous, siliceous or igneous rock, especially in the spray zone of waterfalls. Some colonies grow close to the normal water level of streams in summer, so are probably periodically flooded.