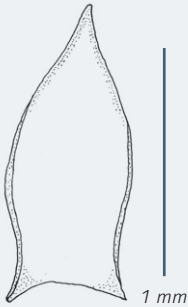
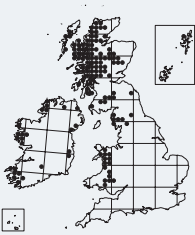


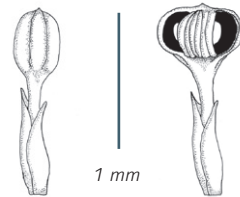
# Andreaea alpina

Alpine Rock-moss



General note about *Andreaea* species

*Andreaea* species are the only mosses that have no seta. Capsules protrude just above the surrounding leaves, and release spores through 4 longitudinal slits, rather like Chinese lanterns.



Generalized *Andreaea* capsules

## Identification

*A. alpina* is a small moss forming reddish-brown to black cushions or patches up to 8 cm, but usually much smaller. The leaves, which lack a nerve, are up to 1.5 mm long and have a very characteristic shape, being widest at or above the middle, narrowing to a relatively short, acute tip. The leaves are appressed when dry, and erect when moist, with the tip above the widest part of the leaves somewhat reflexed from the sheathing base, giving the shoots a very neat appearance when seen from above.

## Similar species

Confusion is only likely with other species of *Andreaea* and particularly with the much more common *A. rupestris* (p. 312) and the scarce *A. mutabilis* (p. 313) which also lack a nerve. Both these species are normally smaller and differ in the leaves usually being widest below the middle, and *A. mutabilis* has a leaf base that hardly clasps the stem.

## Habitat

Found on at least periodically irrigated rocks on crags, by lakes and streams and occasionally on drier boulders in humid areas. It can form very large patches on shallow, stony soils where snow lies late in the year. It is a predominantly montane species, but can occasionally occur at lower altitudes.