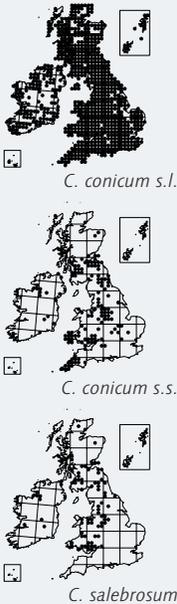


Conocephalum conicum/salebrosum

Great Scented Liverwort/Snakewort

Key 9



Identification

C. conicum has large (up to 17 mm wide), very conspicuous thalli that often form extensive mats. The thalli are strongly aromatic, flat, leathery, dark green, dichotomously branching, often with purplish margins. The surface is smooth and shiny, with a prominent but ungrooved network of lines. Its air pores are more conspicuous than the lines. Male plants have sessile, terminal cushions. Fruiting female plants bear terminal, stalked, conical receptacles with short descending lobes. *C. salebrosum* is very similar to *C. conicum*, but often slightly smaller (branches up to 12 mm wide). Its thalli are dull above. *C. salebrosum* can be difficult to distinguish from *C. conicum*, but *C. salebrosum* has thalli with conspicuous grooves defining the lines on the surface.

Similar species

Conocephalum species are unlikely to be confused with most other thallose genera because of their large size. *Lunularia cruciata* (p. 252) and *Marchantia polymorpha* (p. 258) are also large, but have gemma receptacles. *Dumortiera hirsuta* (p. 254) has no air pores or lines on its surface. *Preissia quadrata* (p. 257) differs in its narrower thalli with usually strongly purplish-tinged margins; the upper surface, though dotted with air pores, does not have the conspicuous pattern of lines seen in *Conocephalum* species.

Habitat

The typical habitat of *C. conicum* is on damp, shady, mildly base-rich to neutral substrates, such as shady rocks by rivers, streams and waterfalls, but it can also grow on soil on damp banks, on shady walls, and montane rock ledges and banks of gullies. *C. salebrosum* can grow with or close to *C. conicum*, but *C. salebrosum* often occurs in somewhat drier sites and seems to be the commoner species on strongly calcareous substrates. *C. salebrosum* is probably more widespread than its distribution map indicates, as it has only recently been recognized as distinct.