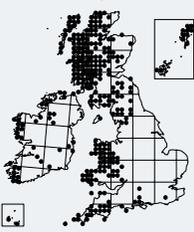


Frullania fragilifolia

Spotty Fingers



Identification Like *F. microphylla*, this very dark, almost black *Frullania* is strongly aromatic, with shoots 0.6–1.2 mm wide. The leaves are about 0.5 mm wide and up to 0.8 mm long, deciduous, coming off on moist fingers (hence the English name), and consist of rounded lobes with small, pocket-shaped lobules. The leaf lobes have modified cells similar to those of *F. tamarisci* (p. 211) and *F. microphylla* (p. 214), but these are mostly scattered and only sometimes arranged in a line from the base of the lobe. Underleaves are slightly but noticeably wider than the stem, shallowly divided into wide, irregular-shaped lobes, and have plane margins.

Similar species *F. tamarisci* (p. 211) has a pointed lobe, and underleaves with recurved margins. *F. teneriffae* (p. 212) and *F. dilatata* (p. 213) are larger, and lack modified cells in the leaf lobes. None of these species is scented. *F. microphylla* (p. 214) has narrower underleaves and does not usually have deciduous leaves, except in the rare var. *deciduifolia*, which sheds both lobe and lobule together – in *F. fragilifolia*, the lobes and lobules tend to come off separately.

Habitat This is a locally frequent, western species, growing on base-enriched, or occasionally acidic rocks, especially near the coast, but also in mountainous areas. It also occurs occasionally on tree bark.