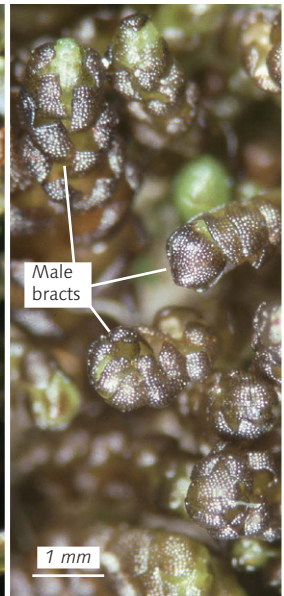
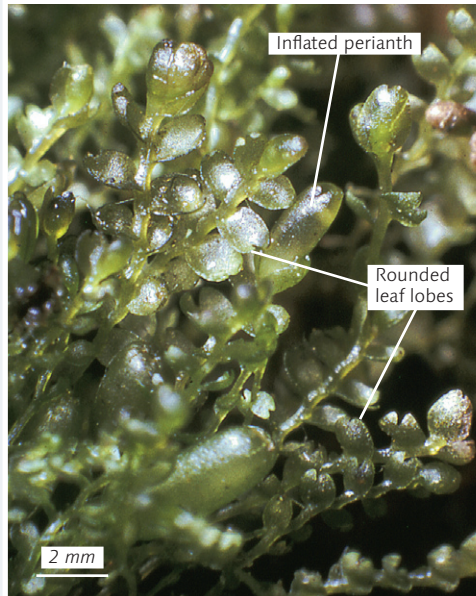
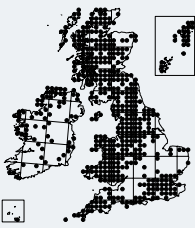


Gymnocolea inflata

Inflated Notchwort

Key 64



Identification This small (shoots 0.3–2 mm wide), dark green (or brown or almost black) liverwort has narrow-based leaves that are normally quite well-spread out on the stem and tend to be rather concave. Each leaf is up to about 1 mm long and wide, bilobed, with a V-shaped notch and characteristically rounded or blunt lobes. *G. inflata* is dioicous and often fertile. The prominent, inflated perianths that give it its name are deciduous and act as a means of dispersal.

Similar species Although the leaves of *G. inflata* are similar in shape to *Leiocolea* species, the dark colour and restriction to acidic habitats are quite different. The only other British *Gymnocolea*, *G. acutiloba* (Paton, p. 234), is a very rare plant of scree beds and distinguished by its narrow, acute leaf lobes. *Cladopodiella fluitans* (p. 98) is often confused with *G. inflata* on peatlands, owing to its rounded lobes. Its leaves are relatively longer and narrower, but its diagnostic feature is the thread-like branches that stick downwards from the stem into the substrate. *Lophozia ventricosa* (p. 116) and most other ecologically similar species have acute leaf lobes.

Habitat *G. inflata* is characteristic of damp, acidic places, such as wet heaths, bogs and the edges of peaty pools. It can cover quite extensive areas of bare peat, and favours grazed peatlands and heaths. It also grows on non-base-rich shale, gravel or sand, as well as between rocks in block scree. Small, compact plants are sometimes found on rock faces in humid woodlands, and can be confusing to identify.