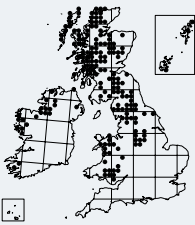


Leiocolea alpestris

L. collaris

Mountain Notchwort



Identification A medium-sized *Leiocolea* species, about the size of *Lophozia ventricosa* (shoots 0.5–3 mm wide), and somewhat intermediate between the small *L. badensis* and the large *L. bantriensis*. Like other members of the genus, it is translucent, pale green, and has leaves with 2 rather blunt, or even rounded, lobes. Leaves are up to 2 mm wide and about 1.5 mm long. Like *L. bantriensis*, it is scented and has underleaves. The leaf base does not or only very slightly runs down along the stem. Long, tubular perianths can often be found, but male plants are harder to detect. Gemmae are absent.

Similar species The smaller *L. badensis* (p. 127) and *L. turbinata* (p. 128) lack underleaves and are unscented (but beware that some people cannot smell the *Leiocolea* scent); *L. turbinata* also differs in its narrow-based leaves. The larger *L. bantriensis* (p. 124) can be difficult to distinguish from luxuriant *L. alpestris*, but *L. bantriensis* usually has a leaf base that more obviously runs down the front of the stem. The scarcer, more habitat-specific *L. heterocolpos* (p. 126) has gemmiferous shoots, but plants without gemmae can be almost impossible to distinguish from *L. alpestris*. The uncommon *Lophozia obtusa* (Paton, p. 203) normally has rounded leaf lobes and few or no underleaves.

Habitat Like all *Leiocolea* species, *L. alpestris* grows in calcareous habitats, but has more catholic tastes than other members of the genus. It most often forms patches on damp, base-rich boulders or rock outcrops in river gullies or on upland cliffs, but also grows as scattered shoots on the edge of flushes, in drier calcareous turf, or in dune slacks.