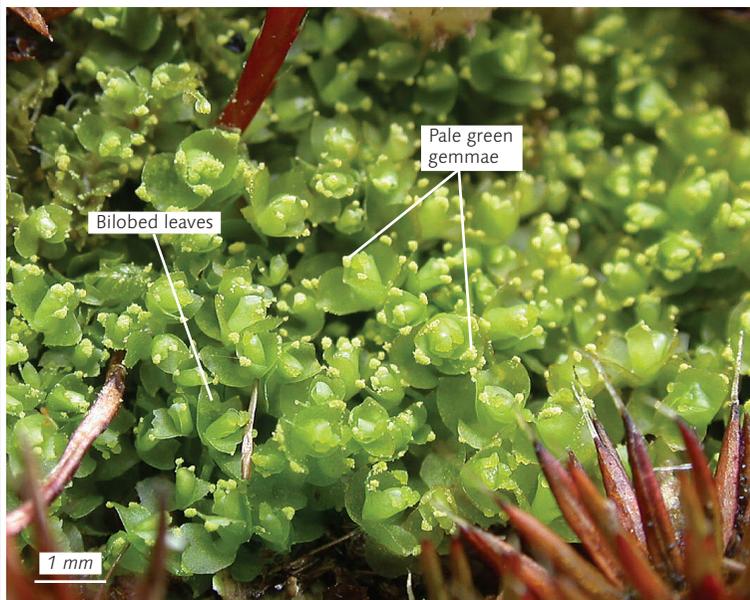
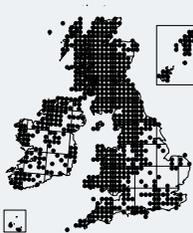


Lophozia ventricosa

Tumid Notchwort

Key 62



Identification *L. ventricosa* is usually the first member of its genus seen by beginners and is such a frequent plant in upland Britain that its appearance needs memorizing. It is usually a characteristically opaque, bright green, quite different from other British liverworts, with prominent clusters of green gemmae on the tips of its bilobed leaves. The leaf lobes are separated by a shallow, V-shaped notch. It lacks underleaves, and the back of the stem is usually pigmented red-brown. Occasionally, whole plants may be brown or purplish. The growth form varies considerably, from small, compact plants on rock ledges to slender, upright forms growing through *Sphagnum* on steep, mossy slopes. Shoots are 1–2 mm wide, and leaves are 1–1.5 mm wide and long.

Similar species Few other British *Lophozia* species have green gemmae, except *L. incisa* (p. 117), which is pale green, lacks pigments on the back of its stem and has toothed leaves. The much rarer *L. obtusa* (Paton, p. 203) has blunt, rounded leaf lobes and usually lacks gemmae. The extremely rare *L. longiflora* (Paton, p. 191) has been recorded once or twice on decaying logs in Scottish woodland. It can only be distinguished from *L. ventricosa* by microscopical examination of well-developed lobes on the perianth mouth. *Harpanthus scutatus* (p. 189) has inconspicuous gemmae and large underleaves. Other common, bilobed-leaved liverworts include: *Cephalozia bicuspidata* (p. 92), with very narrow, pincer-shaped leaves; *Lophocolea bidentata* (p. 183), with translucent leaves and a strong smell; *Marsupella emarginata* (p. 155), with close-set, transverse leaves; *Leiocolea* species (pp. 123–128) and *Gymnocolea inflata* (p. 129) with rounded leaf lobes and no gemmae.

Habitat Common in many acidic places, especially in upland Britain. These include peat bogs, flush edges, wet heath, rocky slopes, mossy walls, quarries, mine tips, cliff ledges, acidic dunes and woodland. Substrates include rock, soil, peat, *Sphagnum* and decaying wood.

Photo David Holyoak Text Sam Bosanquet