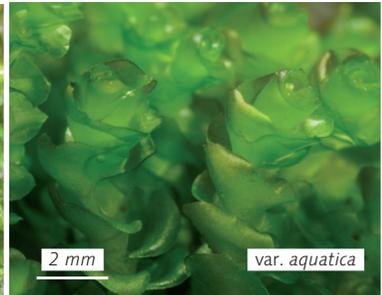
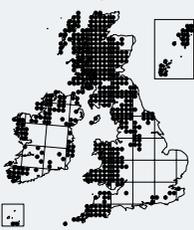


Marsupella emarginata

Notched Rustwort

Key 63



Identification

This is much the commonest species of *Marsupella*, and is one of the most frequent liverworts in upland Britain. It grows in turfs of erect stems which are rather open and only rarely form dense cushions. Shoots are typically dull to glossy green, but may be reddish or purple-black. Stems vary in length (1–8 cm), but are normally in the lower part of this range. Leaves are set horizontally on the stem, with the leaf base loosely sheathing it, as wide or wider than long and bilobed with the notch up to one-third of the leaf length. The lateral margins of the leaves are distinctively recurved. Three varieties are accepted at present; *var. emarginata* has a relatively deep notch one-fifth to one-third of the length of the leaf, and can grow in drier places (its shoots are 0.5–1.5 mm wide, with leaves typically about 1 mm wide and long); *var. aquatica* is usually larger (shoots 1.5–3.5 mm wide; leaves 1–2 mm wide and 1–1.5 mm long), with a notch less than one-fifth of the leaf length, more rounded leaf lobes, and grows in more permanently wet places; *var. pearsonii* is smaller (shoots 1 to about 2 mm wide; leaves to about 1.3 mm wide and 0.5–1 mm long), dark red or purplish, and again has a small notch and rounded lobes, which often have an extra short point at the tip, although this may be eroded.

Similar species

The recurved leaf margin distinguishes *M. emarginata* from other *Marsupella* species (pp. 156–161). Most others have deeper notches. *M. arctica* (Paton, p. 307) is a rare plant of areas of late-lying snow, which has a very shallow notch and strongly concave leaves. The colour and bilobed leaves may resemble *Anastrophyllum minutum* (p. 132), but *A. minutum* has asymmetrical leaves and gemmiferous shoots are sometimes present, tipped by green (or more rarely red) gemmae.

Habitat

A common and often abundant species of wet or damp, acidic places, most frequent on rocks or gravel in and by streams and rivers, but also occurring on humid rocks in woodland, wet crags, lake margins, wet gravel tracks and by snowbeds.

Photos Sam Bosanquet (top left), Sean Edwards (bottom left), Des Callaghan (top right) & Richard Lansdown (bottom right) Text Gordon Rothero