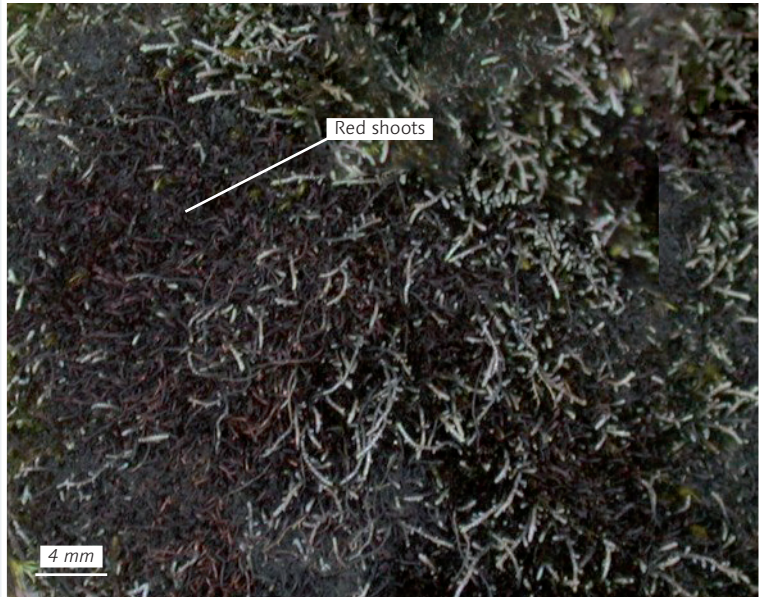
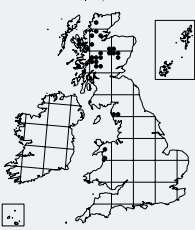


# *Marsupella stableri*

*M. boeckii* var. *stableri*

Stabler's Rustwort



**Identification** A montane liverwort that usually grows as prostrate, thread-like, distinctively rosy red mats, but some plants can be much darker red or almost black, or green in deep shade. The shoots can be up to 15 mm long, but are normally much shorter, and very narrow. The small leaves are scarcely wider than the stems, and set close together. The leaves are not much more than 0.25 mm long, erect, often appressed to the stem, usually longer than wide, and bilobed with acute lobes and an acute notch to half the length of the leaf. Dioicous and usually fertile.

**Similar species** The thin, rosy-red mats of this species on steep, wet, acidic rock surfaces are generally easy to distinguish. It is more likely to be confused with *Cephaloziella* species (pp. 104–108) than any other *Marsupella*, apart from the exceedingly rare *M. boeckii* (Paton, p. 318), which is pale green rather than red. The leaf insertion in *Cephaloziella* species is different, and the perianth is obvious, being held clear of the leaves. *C. divaricata* (p. 106) is the most likely *Cephaloziella* species to occur in the same habitat, but it has underleaves. Two other uncommon species, *Eremonotus myriocarpus* (p. 130) and *Sphenolobopsis pearsonii* (p. 131), are also superficially very similar. *E. myriocarpus* is often a similar colour to *M. stableri*, but has very different inflorescences and usually grows on base-rich substrates. *S. pearsonii* has a deeper notch, longer, tapering lobes and grows in very sheltered sites, usually on lower ground.

**Habitat** *M. stableri* grows on sheltered, steep, wet or frequently irrigated rock surfaces, particularly in crevices at the base of crags, but also on low boulders, on stones in flushes and on the shallow mineral soils in areas of very late-lying snow. It favours areas of low sun exposure, so most stands are on sites facing north or north-east.