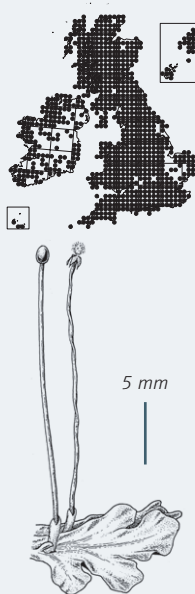


# *Pellia epiphylla*

Overleaf Pellia

Key 21



**Identification** *Pellia epiphylla* has medium-sized (often 1 cm or more wide), rather featureless thalli. The midrib is rather ill-defined, the margin is not differentiated into a distinct wing, and the surface lacks an angular network of cells visible on the surface of the thallus. In *P. epiphylla* the thalli are sparingly branched and come in various shades of green, sometimes with reddish or purplish tinges. The species is monoicous, with male organs resembling tiny volcanoes scattered in a broad row along the line of the midrib, and a vertical flap surrounding the female organs on the same thallus.

**Similar species** It is important to examine *Pellia* colonies closely in the field to try to find the sex organs, as these are necessary to distinguish *P. epiphylla* from *P. neesiana* (p. 236). *P. epiphylla* is our only monoicous species; the female inflorescence arises near the tip of a thallus and the male inflorescences can be seen if the older parts of the thallus are scrutinized carefully. In *P. neesiana* male and female plants are separate, and the tissue around the female organ forms a short tube rather than a flap. The other dioicous species, *P. endiviifolia* (p. 237), may often be distinguished vegetatively by its narrow, autumnal branches. Frustratingly, it is not uncommon in summer to find vigorous mats of *Pellia* which lack sexual organs or narrow branches, and are therefore unidentifiable.

**Habitat** *P. epiphylla* is most frequent by streams, rivers and ditches, where it may form a dense band just above the normal water level on shaded banks. It is also frequent on ground in other moist habitats such as wet woodland, marshes and flushes, and on wet rock outcrops. It grows on neutral or acidic substrates, but is absent from more base-rich sites.