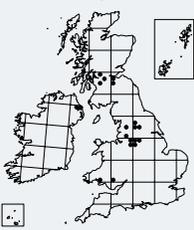


Physcomitrium sphaericum

Dwarf Bladder-moss



Identification *P. sphaericum* grows in scattered shoots or loose tufts up to 4 mm tall. The more or less untoothed leaves are 1.5–2 mm long, spread away from the stem, and have large, lax cells, easily visible with a 10 hand lens. The leaves of *P. sphaericum* appear blunt, and almost hooded owing to the slightly inrolled margins. Capsules are frequent, almost spherical, and erect on a short (less than 5 mm) seta, with a convex or hemispherical, shortly pointed lid.

Similar species Distinctive in form and habitat, *P. sphaericum* often grows (and hybridizes) with *Aphanorhagma patens* (p. 567), which has hidden capsules that do not shed their lid. It is considerably smaller than *P. pyriforme* (p. 565), which has a pear-shaped capsule. *Entosthodon* species (pp. 562–564) have a smooth, convex lid on the capsule. *P. eurystomum* (Smith, p. 511) is an even rarer plant, confined to a couple of seasonal ponds in the Norfolk Breckland. It has a slightly longer seta than *P. sphaericum* and distinctly toothed leaves. At first glance, *P. sphaericum* looks slightly like *Tortula truncata* (p. 482), but that species has more acutely tipped leaves than *P. sphaericum*, and smaller, less lax leaf cells.

Habitat Mainly found on seasonally exposed mud at the margins of reservoirs and other water bodies. Although a rare plant, it can sometimes grow in enormous abundance when conditions permit.