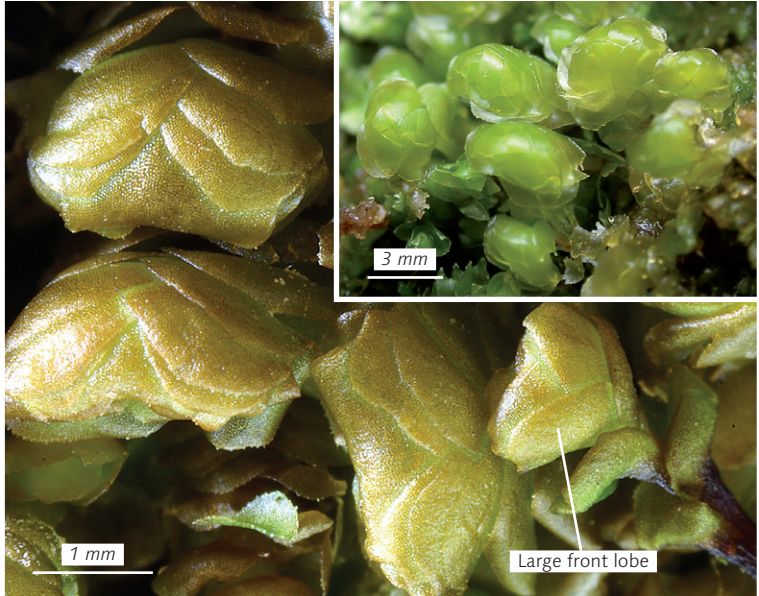
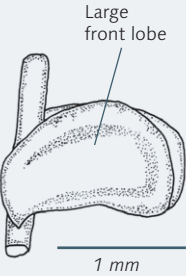
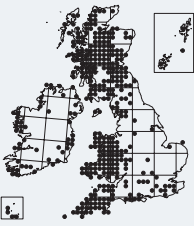


# Scapania compacta

Thick-set Earwort

Key 32



**Identification** The equal-sized front and back leaf lobes of this medium-sized, mid-green or brown *Scapania* are distinctive. The front lobes lie flat on the back lobes and neither run down onto the stem. Pale green gemmae are often present, but are seldom very prominent. Shoots are 1.5–4 mm wide, with leaves up to about 1.5 mm long.

**Similar species** *S. subalpina* (p. 176) is the only other relatively common *Scapania* with equal-sized leaf lobes, but its back lobes run down onto the stem. The scarce, lime-loving *S. cuspiduligera* (p. 169) is smaller, has the front lobe reflexed from the back one, and has distinctive, red gemmae. *S. aequiloba* (p. 178) also does not have its leaf lobes pressed together. Small plants of *S. compacta* may be confused with *Marsupella emarginata* (p. 155), which is usually brown, has recurved leaf margins and lobes that are not pressed close to each other.

**Habitat** *S. compacta* is common in rocky places or on shallow soil, more often in the open than in woodland. It is particularly frequent on the west coast and on bluffs in the uplands, but also grows in disused quarries, on drystone walls or on gravelly heathland. Its tendency to grow in exposed, often rather dry places is characteristic. *S. compacta* is sometimes found in crevices on boulders in rivers in upland districts, a habitat shared with *S. subalpina*.