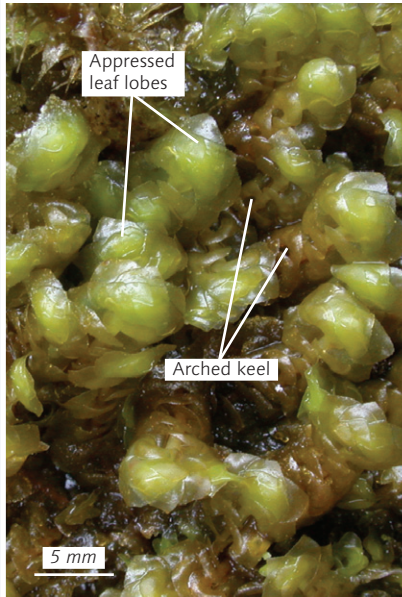
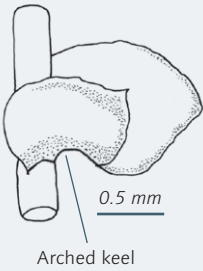
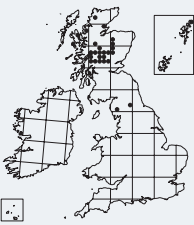


Scapania degenii

Degen's Earwort



Identification

This medium-sized (shoots 2–2.5 mm wide, with leaves to about 2 mm long) lime-lover has a characteristic golden brown colour. When its dark brown gemmae are present it can be quite easily recognized by the leaf lobes which do not run down onto the stem, and by its moderately arched keel and flat appearance of shoots, with the front lobe pressed to the back lobe – no other species with brown gemmae shares these features. A microscope is needed for identification when gemmae are absent, as several other *Scapania* species have similarly shaped leaves. Exceptionally in this genus, the perianths are creased below the mouth.

Similar species

None of the other *Scapania* species with brown gemmae that are likely to be found in high-altitude calcareous flushes, such as *S. cuspiduligera* (p. 169) or *S. calcicola* (Paton, p. 350), have the golden brown colour and flattened appearance of *S. degenii*. *S. nemorea* (p. 172) has leaf lobes that run down onto the stem, a straight keel and is normally distinctive in its strongly toothed leaf margins. *S. irrigua* (p. 173) is not golden brown, but needs to be ruled out microscopically if gemmae are absent.

Habitat

Locally frequent in the Breadalbane Mountains of central Scotland; rare elsewhere in the uplands. *S. degenii* grows only on schist or limestone rocks in montane flushes and mossy, lime-rich turf on flush edges. It is sometimes found on cliff ledges, and on damp, gravelly, base-rich soil at the cliff foot.