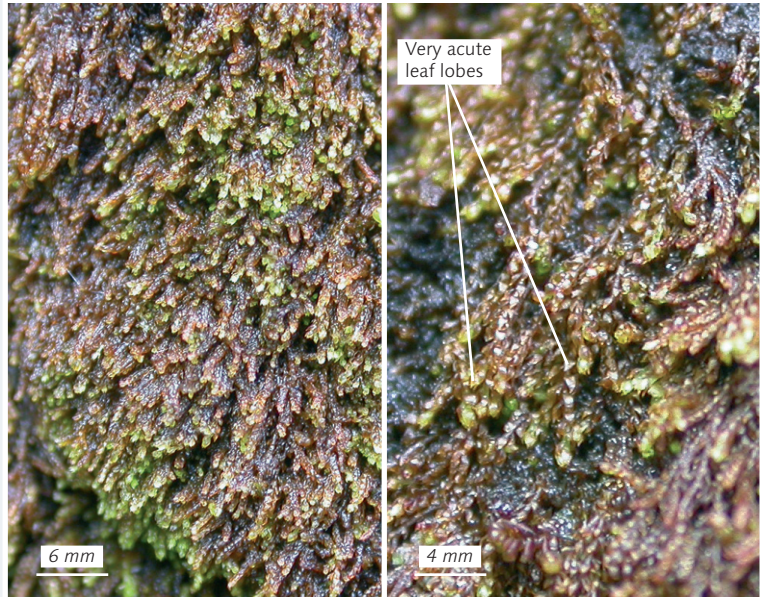
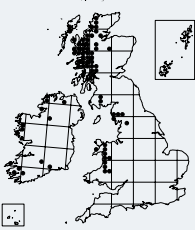


Sphenolobopsis pearsonii

Horsehair Threadwort



Identification Although it looks like a *Cephaloziella*, this species is surprisingly easy to recognize with a $\times 20$ hand lens. It forms intricately interwoven patches of slender (less than 0.5 mm wide), brown or almost black shoots on vertical rock. Its bilobed leaves are up to 0.25 mm long, set across the stem, are very deeply divided and have very acute tips: a more extreme leaf shape than *Cephaloziella divaricata*, the only member of that genus that grows on dry rock faces. The diagnostic Y-shaped branches at the end of the shoots can usually be detected in the field.

Similar species *Cephaloziella divaricata* (p. 106) has less deeply divided, less acute leaves and its branching is more irregular. *Eremonotus myriocarpus* (p. 130) prefers base-rich rocks, often has prominent perianths (very indistinct in *Sphenolobopsis*), and irregular branching. Slender plants of *Marsupella emarginata* (p. 155) have wider, more shallowly notched leaves, usually with recurved margins. *Marsupella stableri* (p. 159) lacks Y-shaped branches and is typically found in montane areas where snow lies late in the year.

Habitat Shaded outcrops of neutral or acidic shale or sandstone in wooded gorges are the typical habitat of *S. pearsonii*. It also grows on the sides of boulders in large scree beds or on mountain slopes, as well as on crags of granite or gneiss. It needs quite high levels of humidity.