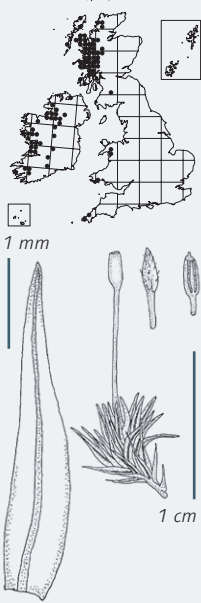


Ulota calvescens

Balding Pincushion



Identification

U. calvescens forms small tufts 0.5–1 cm tall, which look very similar to those of our other, commoner *Ulota* species. Its leaves are about 4 mm long, strongly crisped when dry, and the nerve ends below the tip. A microscope shows that the rather narrow leaf base is deeply and narrowly furrowed near each margin. Capsules form beneath a pale, glossy calyptra that has few hairs, making the dark tip stand out prominently. They are very young in spring and expand by mid-summer, so *U. calvescens* is most easily spotted in these seasons. The capsules are 1.5–2.5 mm long, and held on a seta 4–6 mm long (the seta is rather longer than in other *Ulota* species).

Similar species

U. crista (p. 658) also has strongly crisped leaves when dry, but a much hairier calyptra, and the lower part of its leaves is not furrowed.

Habitat

This exclusively western species grows on twigs and branches, especially of birch, hazel and rowan in woods and other sheltered places. It is especially frequent on and around The Burren in Ireland.