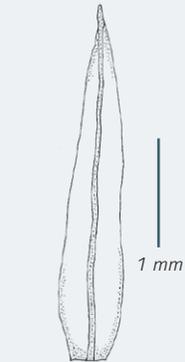


*Uloa phyllantha*

Frizzled Pincushion

Key 271

**Identification**

*U. phyllantha* forms pale cushions 1–3.5 cm tall, olive-green above and reddish-brown or almost black below. The leaves are 2.5–4.5 mm long and are straight when moist, but curl up when dry. Each has a brownish nerve that protrudes from the tip, and this supports a conspicuous cluster of brown gemmae on most of the upper leaves of each shoot. Capsules are very rare in spring and summer.

**Similar species**

Other *Uloa* species do not form gemmae. Leaves of *Orthotrichum* species (pp. 646–657) do not curl and crisp when dry. The gemmae of *O. lyellii* (p. 648) are dispersed over the blade of the leaf rather than clustered at the tip. *Leptodontium gemmascens* (p. 445) produces clusters of gemmae at the tip of its leaves, but has shoots no more than 1 cm tall, leaves with coarsely toothed upper margins, and does not grow on living wood. *Aulacomnium androgynum* (p. 627) produces clusters of green gemmae, but these are on a stalk, and held well above the leaves.

**Habitat**

*U. phyllantha* usually grows on the branches and trunks of trees and bushes. Less often it occurs on rocks, especially on or near the coast. This moss was formerly mainly coastal – and remains abundant in many coastal districts – but is now much commoner inland than it was during much of the 19th and 20th centuries.