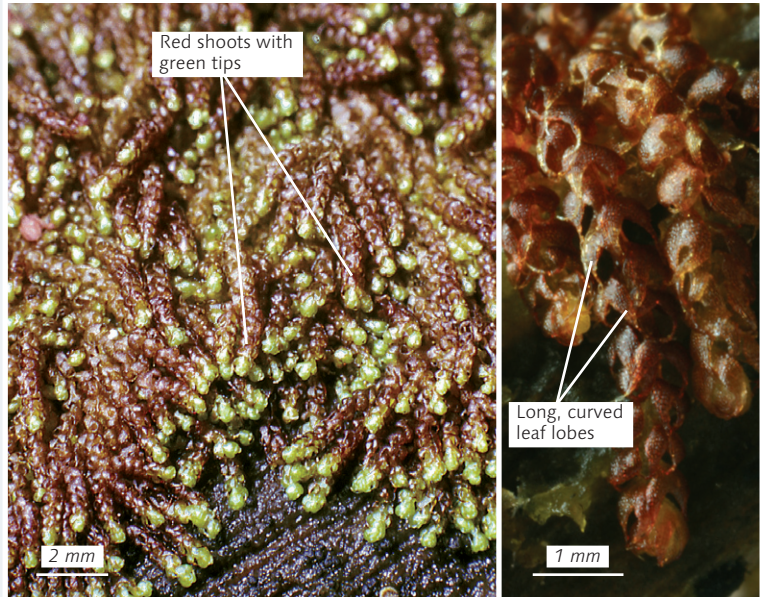
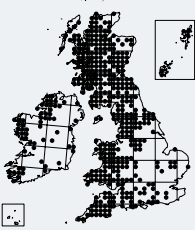


Nowellia curvifolia

Rustwort

Key 55



Identification Few liverworts can be identified from a distance, but *N. curvifolia* often turns whole logs crimson and is then very easily recognized. Closer examination reveals that each leaf is deeply concave and has 2 very long, curved teeth that come together like pincers. The individual shoots, which are 0.5–1 mm wide, may be dark red or a mix of red and green; some shoots in deep shade can lack red colours entirely. Leaves are often less than 1 mm wide and long. Gemmae are probably common, but are difficult to spot; perianths and capsules are frequent.

Similar species The redness and very concave leaves with 2 long teeth are unique among British liverworts. The leaves of the similar-sized *Cephalozia bicuspidata* (p. 92) are flatter, without such a concave base. Very depauperate plants of *Nowellia* may be confusing, but careful examination should reveal some of the uniquely shaped leaves.

Habitat This is the commonest and most prominent member of the interesting flora that develops on rotting logs in woodland in western Britain, replacing the *Lophocolea heterophylla*-based assemblage found further east. In the extreme west, where *N. curvifolia* is most frequent, it may be abundant on numerous logs in a wood and sometimes ascends onto tree trunks, but further east it is often restricted to just one or two logs. It is always worth checking *Nowellia*-covered logs for other, less common liverworts. *N. curvifolia* sometimes grows on peat in the uplands, but seldom in any quantity.