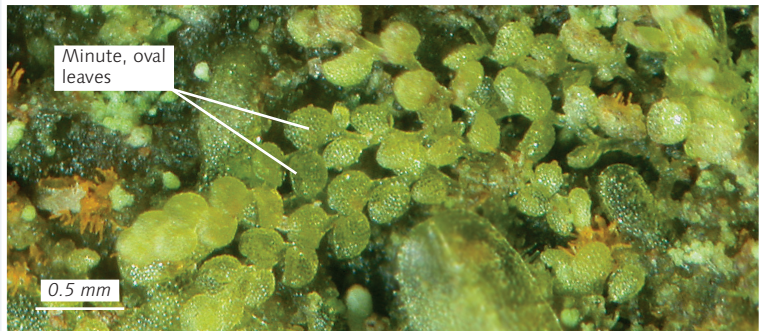
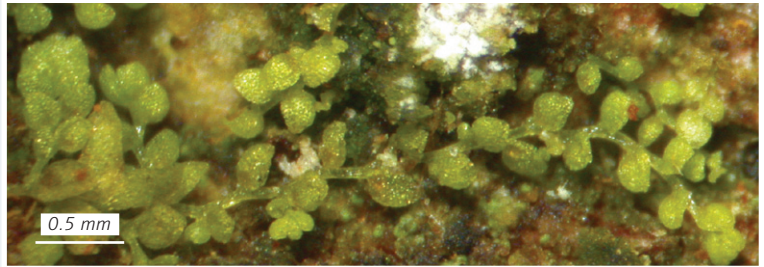
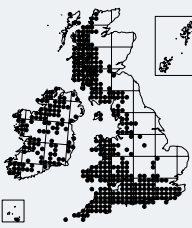


# *Microlejeunea ulicina*

Fairy Beads

Key 41



**Identification** Single shoots of this very small (shoots up to about 6 mm long and 0.25–0.35 mm wide), pale green leafy liverwort may be hard to spot without a hand lens, but it sometimes forms extensive mats. The leaves are minute and oval, with a lobule more than half as big as the lobe. Underleaves are bilobed. Individual shoots look like a string of beads. Female shoots are common, but male plants are unknown in the British Isles.

**Similar species** *Cololejeunea minutissima* (p. 226) is similar, and grows in similar habitats, but has shorter, rounder leaves, forms denser patches, and is usually fertile, with many star-like perianths. It lacks underleaves, which are present in *M. ulicina*. Other small, related species have differently shaped leaves and underleaves, and most species of *Lejeunea* (pp. 221–223) are larger. *Lejeunea hibernica* (Paton, p. 497), which is confined to south-west Ireland, may be somewhat similar, but both the leaves and the lobule are extremely variable in size along the stem, and the individual shoots tend to be rather stiff and straight. *Aphanolejeunea microscopica* (p. 227) has much longer, narrower leaves.

**Habitat** *M. ulicina* grows on sheltered tree trunks in humid places, and also on rock, often over other bryophytes. Common in the west, rare or absent in the east.