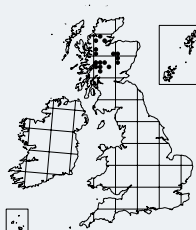


Pleurocladula albescens

Snow Threadwort



Identification This small liverwort grows in loose mats on soil. Shoots are 0.4–1.2 mm wide, and leaves are less than 1 mm long and wide. Its most distinctive feature is its almost white or greyish-green (sometimes bright green) colour. Its leaves are tiny, but with a hand lens they can be seen to be rounded, deeply concave and distinctly bilobed. Small, egg-shaped leaves lie hidden on the underside of the stem. Capsules have not been found in Scotland.

Similar species *Cephalozia ambigua* (Paton, p. 100) and some alpine forms of *C. bicuspidata* (p. 92) can be quite similar with rounded, concave, bilobed leaves, but these lack any trace of underleaves. *Odontoschisma macounii* (Paton, p. 132) can be superficially similar, but its leaves are unlobed or at most very shallowly bilobed and the underleaves are smaller.

Habitat This exclusively alpine species is very characteristic of snowbed communities, where it can grow on soil or peat at the edge of snow patches or on damp, stony slopes and sides of gullies, sometimes in pure patches, but often mixed with other small liverworts such as *Gymnomitrium concinnatum*.