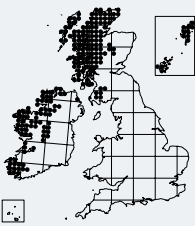


# *Pleurozia purpurea*

Purple Spoonwort

Key 38



**Identification** This large (shoots up to 4 mm wide) liverwort is red, purple, or mottled red and green, and is readily recognized without a hand lens thanks to its fat, wormlike shoots and distinctive colour. A hand lens will reveal 4 rows of leaves: 2 of large ones (to 2.5 mm wide and 3 mm long) on the upper side of the plant and 2 of smaller (1 mm wide and 2 mm long), sack-shaped ones hugging the underside of the stem.

**Similar species** Unmistakable. *Scapania ornithopodioides* (p. 181) has lobes of two different sizes, but its smaller ones are on the upper side of the plant, not the underside. *Mylia taylorii* (p. 141) is similarly large and red, but has just 2 rows of rounded leaves.

**Habitat** A common plant in the Scottish Highlands and in much of western Ireland, but bizarrely absent from England and Wales. It grows on bogs and steep, peaty or rocky slopes, often in profusion. *Pleurozia* is a frequent member of the northern hepatic mat of steep, heathery mountain sides, but is far less restricted to such habitats than other members of that assemblage.