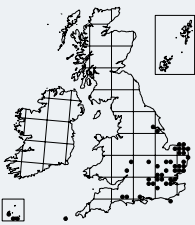
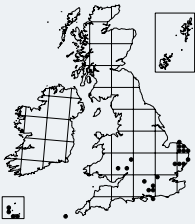


Sphaerocarpos michelii/texanus

Micheli's/Texas Balloonwort

*S. michelii**S. texanus***Identification**

S. michelii and *S. texanus* can only be distinguished from each other by microscopical examination of their spores. These species form a tiny, disc-like thallus which bears densely packed, balloon-like structures that surround the sex organs and spore bodies. Female plants grow up to 2 cm across, and the balloon-like structures are inflated and pear-shaped (up to 1.8 mm across). These structures are flask-shaped and smaller on male plants. The capsules are hidden in the female structures, and need to be collected ripe for identification. Male plants are less likely to be detected because they are much smaller (up to 5 mm across) than females, and often dark. In addition, the bigger female plants may partly grow over them. The male organs are surrounded by flask-shaped tubes less than 0.5 mm tall.

Similar species

Sphaerocarpos species are not likely to be confused with other liverworts.

Habitat

These are rare, southern plants, typically found in neglected corners of gardens, plant nurseries and in arable fields, especially fields of bulbs, flowers and vegetables, cereal stubble, and more rarely on roadsides and waste ground. Substrates are usually non-calcareous or neutral.