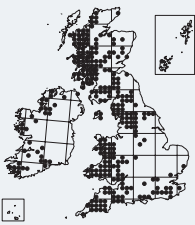


Trichocolea tomentella

Handsome Woollywort

Key 28



Identification

The leaves of this large (shoots about 4 cm long), attractive liverwort are so finely divided that their individual parts are hardly visible with the naked eye. They give the plant a fluffy appearance that is only shared by the thread-like *Blepharostoma trichophyllum*. The very pale green *Trichocolea* plants are bipinnately branched, with branches at right angles to the main stem and further branches at right angles off these.

Similar species

Unique among British liverworts and simply unmistakable. The pinnate growth form of *T. tomentella* is vaguely reminiscent of the moss *Thuidium tamariscinum* (p. 696), but that has undivided, nerved leaves and does not look fluffy.

Habitat

A moderately common plant of river valleys in the lowlands of western Britain, especially characteristic of steep, slightly flushed banks, or the mossy tops of stones in streams. *T. tomentella* is occasionally present in abundance, but usually only a few patches are found. It generally grows beneath a tree canopy, but is sometimes present in more open flushes and marshy grassland.