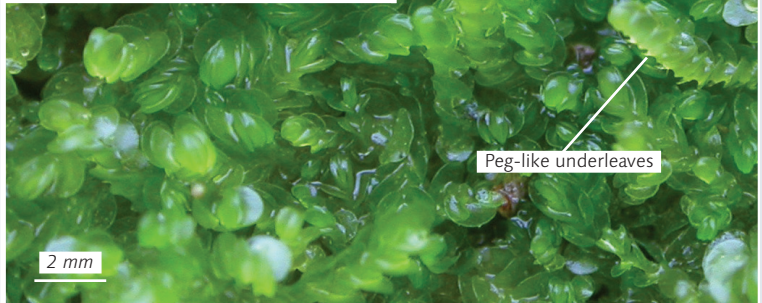
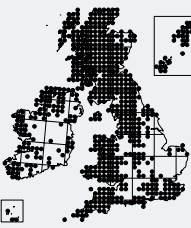


Nardia scalaris

Ladder Flapwort

Key 73



Identification Forming mats or turfs of prostrate to erect stems, sometimes just scattered shoots, varying from a dull, pale green through to shades of red and blackish-purple. The shoots are up to 1.5 mm wide, usually 1–2 cm long, occasionally longer in deep cushions with leaves usually erect, appressed and overlapping. The leaves are rounded, often much wider than long and the back margin projects slightly below the stem. The underleaves are small, but stick out from the stem (often described as peg-like) so are usually visible with a hand lens, even where there are many rhizoids. Dioicous, but often fertile with the female inflorescence having a thickened sheath which sometimes forms a swelling that is often at an angle to the main axis of the stem. *N. scalaris* is aromatic.

Similar species Superficially similar to species of *Jungermannia* (pp. 143–150), but distinguished by the usually present and visible underleaves. Large, lax, aquatic forms can resemble *N. compressa* (p. 151), but shoots of *N. compressa* are more laterally compressed, and its small underleaves are not peg-like and not easy to see even with a hand lens. *N. geoscyphus* (p. 153) usually has shallowly notched leaves.

Habitat Usually on damp, acidic, mineral soil subject to disturbance, where it can form extensive, thin mats. Most common on banks by gravel tracks, in quarries and cuttings for forest roads, on fine scree and forming dense cushions in areas of late-lying snow. It can also occur on river gravels and on rocks in similar places to *N. compressa*.