

Nardia breidlerii

Book Flapwort

Identification A tiny plant, prostrate or erect, forming thin, often rather eroded mats, but often creeping through or over other liverworts. Usually dark-coloured, ranging from a purple-brown through to almost black. The stems are up to 10 mm long, but usually shorter than this with erect leaves, with the leaf apices pointing upwards from the prostrate stem. The leaves are somewhat irregular in shape and are shallowly but distinctly bilobed. Underleaves are present but hard to see with a lens. Dioicous, but fertile plants are normally present; indeed, the relatively stout, erect inflorescence is often the first thing to be noticed in a mat of other species.

Similar species Distinguished from other *Nardia* species (q.v.) by its small size and the more definitely bilobed leaves and, in its restricted habitat, more likely to be confused with species of *Marsupella* (q.v.) or possibly small forms of *Lophozia sudetica* (q.v.). If the underleaves are visible, this will immediately separate *N. breidlerii* as will the marsupium on the usually present inflorescence.

Habitat A plant of shallow lithosols in areas of late snow lie or gravelly terraces on exposed ridges high in the hills, and usually found in a crust of other liverwort species, especially *Marsupella brevissima*.