

Nardia scalaris

Ladder Flapwort



Identification Forming mats or turfs of procumbent to erect stems, sometimes just scattered shoots, varying in colour from a dull pale green through to shades of red to blackish-purple. The stems are usually 1–2 cm long, occasionally longer in deep cushions with leaves usually erect and imbricate. The leaves are rounded, often much wider than long and the postical 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 lens, even where there are a lot of rhizoids. Dioicous, but often fertile with the female inflorescence having a perigynium which sometimes forms a marsupium, a swelling of the perigynium often at an angle to the main axis of the stem.

Similar species Superficially similar to species of *Jungermannia* (q.v.), but distinguished by the usually present and visible underleaves. Large, lax aquatic forms can resemble *N. compressa* (q.v.); for differences see that species.

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