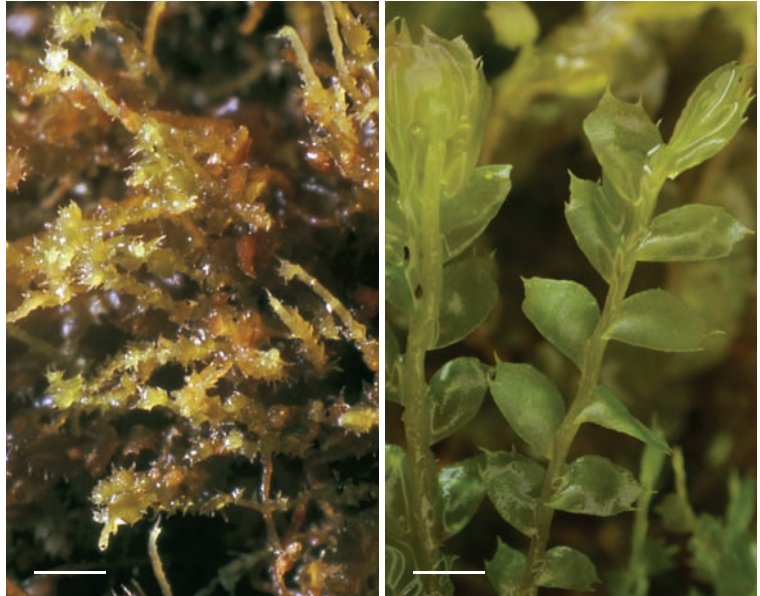


*Plagiochila punctata*

Spotty Featherwort

Section *Arrectae*

**Identification** Plants occur generally in small, dense, pale yellow-green to yellow-brown tufts. Leaves are alternate, often at least as broad as long and then have a rounded appearance. The back leaf margin and apex usually have several spinose teeth, but the apex may be truncated with only two teeth and appear bispinose, especially on depauperate plants. The front leaf margin is entire and at the base is scarcely decurrent on the stem, with the insertion line short and oblique. Leaves are caducous and stems are often bare. Plants are aromatic when crushed. Dioicous, but fertile plants are rarely encountered.

**Similar species** *P. punctata* is most likely to be confused with small plants of *P. spinulosa* (q.v.), but in that species the base of the front leaf margin is long-decurrent and the leaves tend to be longer. *P. exigua* (q.v.) is the other *Plagiochila* species where the base of the front leaf margin is scarcely decurrent, but it has a much narrower leaf insertion. *P. punctata* is more demanding of humidity than *P. spinulosa* and is less frequent.

**Habitat** It forms small clumps on trees and rocks near streams in Atlantic woodland. Patches may develop into characteristic brackets that look like miniature, thatched, lean-to roofs. It also grows in upland tors, where humidity can be maintained in deep clefts in the rock.