



Lomentaria articulata

Common names: Bunny ears, Bunny-eared bead-weed.
Irish name: Cluasa coinín.

Phylum: Rhodophyta
Class: Florideophyceae
Order: Rhodymeniales
Family: Lomentariaceae
Genus: Lomentaria
Species: *L. articulata*



Fig 1. *Lomentaria articulata* attached to a rocky substrate.

Morphology

- A red alga which has oval or cylindrical bright red to brown fronds compressed into regular segments that look like a string of beads. The hollow segments are soft and the surface shiny.
- Plants grow up to 10 cm long, the bead-like segments are 4-10 mm long and 1-5 mm in diameter.
- Holdfast forms a small disc, the algal forms branches but the pattern is variable; branches may be dichotomous (forked) and can often be whorled. A pair of apical tips are shaped like “Bunny ears”.

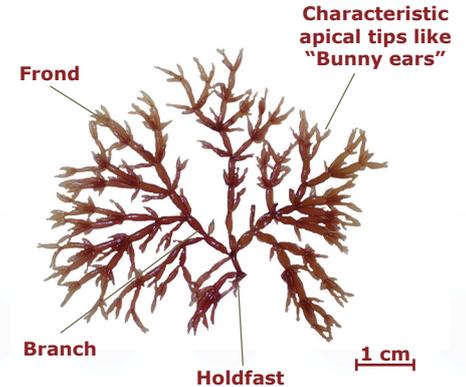


Fig 2. Morphology.

Reproduction

- *Lomentaria articulata* has two macroscopic phases in their life-cycle (see LC1*). Male and female reproductive structures occur on separate plants.
 - ♀ Fertile female: cystocarps are external with a prominent pore.
 - ♂ Fertile male: male reproductive structures can be found in pale patches of sori covering the younger segments.
 - ⊕ Tetrasporophyte: Sori containing tetraspores are found in depressions of the surface of the younger segments too.



Fig 3. Close up of *Lomentaria articulata*.

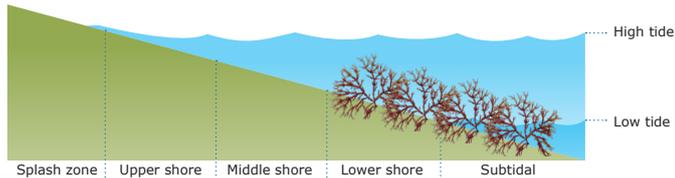
*Note: Life-cycle 1 (LC1) on page 3.



Lomentaria articulata

Distribution and habitat

- All around Ireland and Britain. Found from Norway south to Cameroon and the Mediterranean; records elsewhere require further study.
- Widely found in rockpools, and on boulders in the lower intertidal. Also found subtidally up to 18 m on stipes of *L. digitata*.



Seasonality



Note: These seasonal characteristics may vary slightly from year to year.

Wild resource and cultivation



interesting facts

- This seaweed has bead-like segments that also have apical tips that are shaped like little “Bunny Ears” hence the common name.
- It is very common in the intertidal and can be seen on rocks or as epiphyte to other seaweeds.
- Despite being a common seaweed in Europe, it is not a well studied alga. However, some research suggests this species may be an important food source for small snails, which can be typically found in abundance on the fronds.



© Pictures: Figs 1 and 2 by Irish Seaweed Consultancy and Fig 3 by Michael D. Guiry.

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