

*Pleurophascum grandiglobum*

M.J.A. Simpson

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 A highlight of the summer camp based at Westport in January 1985 was finding the very beautiful and unusual moss *Pleurophascum grandiglobum* fruiting profusely on both the Denniston and Stockton Plateaus. Associated with the sedge *Calorophus minor*, *Euphrasia disperma*, *Liparophyllum gunnii*, *Hemiphues suffocata*, and other pakihi species, it grew on sandstone pavement where trapped water contributed to a wet habitat. The indehiscent capsules, some of which measured up to 10mm across, were not globular as has been described, but, were shaped rather like a 'flying saucer' with an apiculate tip. They ranged in colour from clear yellow through to bright orange red and at first sight were mistaken for small toadstools. The large, fruiting tufts set among bright green, roundish leaves made a most attractive picture.

This moss is known only from Tasmania and New Zealand, in both places with a very restricted distribution. The first material was collected by Robert Johnston in turfy soil near Picton River, Tasmania and sent by Baron F. von Mueller to Professor S.O. Lindberg who, describing the species in 1875 said 'This moss is of the highest importance, indeed of no less interest to the muscologist than is *Rafflesia* and *Welwitschia* to the phanerogamist.'

*Pleurophascum grandiglobum*

drawn by Pat Brooke