

# *A Planetella gall on Carex nigra*

**Paul A. Smith**

S3RI, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1BJ.

p.a.smith@soton.ac.uk

After being sensitised to the existence of *Planetella* galls by some investigations of *Carex maritima* (see Smith 2023), it was perhaps not so surprising that I would find another one while in the process of looking for some parasitic microfungi. On 27 May 2023 at Loch Arnol, Lewis, vc110 (NB 2995 4898) I

discovered a single gall at the base of a leaf of *Carex nigra* (Fig. 1). It was rather larger and more robust than the galls on *C. maritima*. Following the key in Redfern, Shirley & Bloxham (2023) gives *P. granifex* as perhaps the most likely determination, but the gall is a little large –  $4.5 \times 2$  mm maximum dimensions.

Later I dissected the gall, which had a large hollow chamber inside, and quite thick walls (Fig. 2) – about 0.4 mm thick next to the attachment to the leaf, which seemed very spindly in comparison, and about 0.2 mm wide on the opposite side. There was no sign of an inhabitant within the gall, but the inner surface seemed to consist of a dark, shiny layer. With no further characters of the inhabitant organism to work with there is not really enough information to make a determination, so this one, like the one on *Carex maritima*, is best regarded as *Planetella* sp. Indeed the closest determination with Roskam (2019) is to a species called only “*Planetella* sp.”. No doubt there are more galls out there for those with time and energy to look carefully at the bases of *Carex* spp.

## References

- REDFERN, M., SHIRLEY, P. & BLOXHAM, M. (2023) *British Plant Galls*, 3rd edition. Preston Montford: Field Studies Council.
- ROSKAM, J.C. (2019) *Plant Galls of Europe*, vol. 1. Zeist: KNNV Publishing.
- SMITH, P.A. (2023) Galls on *Carex maritima* leaves. *Cecidology* **38**: 95-97.



Figure 1: *Planetella* sp. gall with the top cut away (the top is on the right). The left edge of the gall was attached to the leaf.



Figure 2: The gall opened up to reveal the single large inner chamber and dark inner surface. The thick wall at the bottom was attached to the leaf.