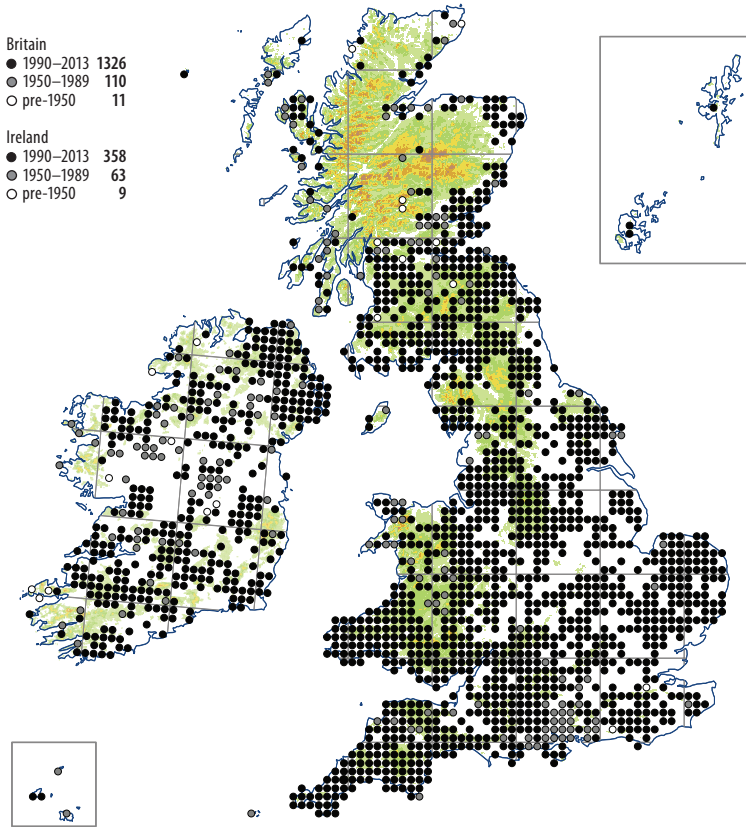


Metzgeria violacea



An epiphyte found mainly on elder and willow, but also on ash, elm and hazel, and less frequently on other trees. It avoids the more acid types of bark. It is often associated with *Frullania dilatata*, *Metzgeria furcata* and *Cryphaea heteromalla*, and sometimes with *Cololejeunea minutissima* and species of *Orthotrichum*, *Ulot*a and *Zygodon*. In SW Britain it may occur in copious quantity on cliff-top elder and blackthorn, and it can also reach great abundance on willow twigs in wet woodland and in the shelter of conifer plantations, for example in the Pennines. It has been recorded as an epiphyll on *Buxus* leaves in humid scrub (Porley, 1996), and on the leaves of *Hedera* and the fungus *Trametes hirsuta* in London (Duckett, 2008). It is also found, albeit rarely, on damp, shaded neutral or base-rich rock and concrete (Paton, 1999). Altitudinal range: 0–460 m.

This species has dramatically increased its range since the 1991–1994 Atlas, especially in C and E England, and its abundance in its core range appears to have increased concomitantly. Records indicate a gradual increase in the late 20th century gathering pace considerably in the early 21st century. Grolle & So (2003) showed that the long-established name *M. fruticulosa* had been misapplied, and that *M. violacea* is the correct name for this species.

Dioicous; female plants are more frequent than male; sporophytes are generally rare but are more frequent in Irish and Welsh conifer plantations, recorded in May, July, August and November. Gemmae are abundant.

Patchily recorded both because of the relatively recent separation of *M. violacea* from *M. consanguinea* (Paton, 1977a), and because some areas have been poorly recorded since the recent period of epiphyte increase began.

Suboceanic Temperate. From Spain northwards and eastwards to Croatia, Slovakia, Poland and southern Scandinavia; S America and N America. Reports of *M. violacea* from Macaronesia, Africa, Asia and Australasia relate to other species of *Metzgeria* (Grolle & So, 2003).

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