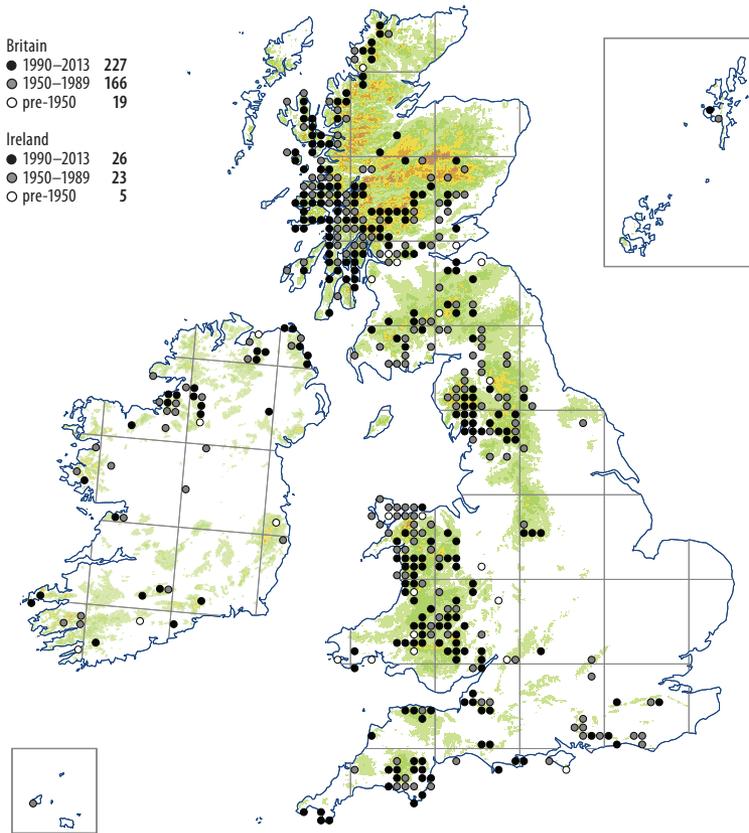


# Porella arboris-vitae



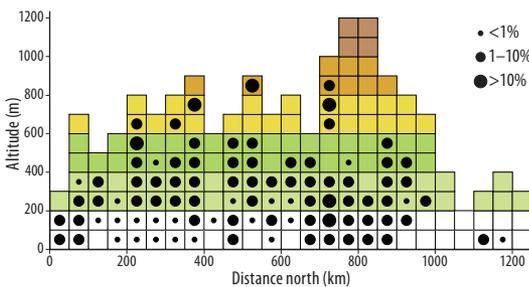
Widespread but rarely present in large amounts. On shaded dry boulders and vertical rock faces in sheltered low-lying wooded ravines, generally on base-rich substrates, and often growing with other mild calcicoles such as *Frullania tamarisci* and *Plagiochila porelloides*. It also occurs on shaded basic montane cliffs and, more rarely, as an epiphyte on ash and hazel in wooded ravines, on shaded basic rocks in woods, on tree bases, and in grassy turf, either on north-facing chalk slopes or steep, shaded slopes below basic cliffs. It is more shade-demanding than *Porella platyphylla*. Altitudinal range: 10–750 m.

Some of the south-easterly populations have been lost as a result of under-grazing or agricultural improvement of chalk grassland (Porley, 1999b), in common with some of the other

characteristic species of the ‘southern hepatic mat’ defined by Porley & Rose (2001).

Diocious; commonly female in Britain; male plants and sporophytes are unknown here.

This is a highly variable species, and the varieties *killarniensis* and *obscura* are merely extremes in a continuum (Paton, 1999). Paton (1999) also discusses colonies of *P. arboris-vitae* in Cornwall and SW Ireland that are morphologically close to *P. canariensis*, and similar plants also grow at Manorbier, Pembrokeshire (Bosanquet, 2010). However, Hentschel *et al.* (2007) have shown that *P. canariensis* is genetically identical to *P. obtusata* and distinct from less dentate forms of *P. arboris-vitae*, so the British plants are now considered to be extremes of this last species.



Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Most of Europe north to SW Norway, east to Sicily and Ukraine; Turkey, Caucasus, Iran, China; N Africa.

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