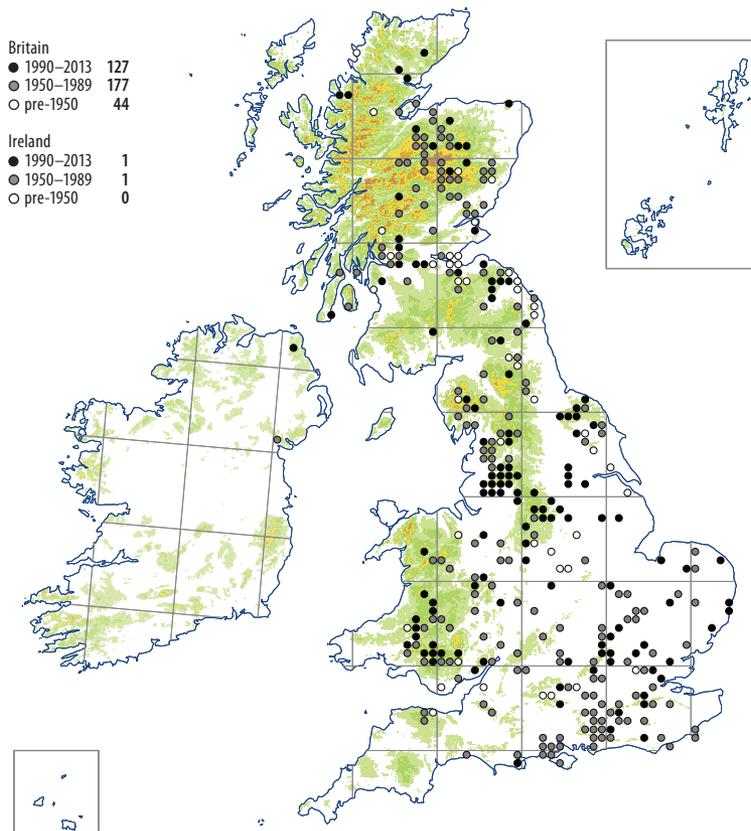


Ptilidium pulcherrimum

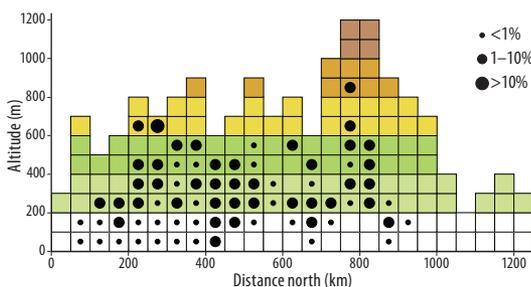


This predominantly corticolous species occurs mainly in semi-natural woodlands, occasionally in plantations and scrub. Although often present in small quantity, it is able to colonise a variety of tree species, including birch, ash and less frequently oak in drier woodland, and willow and alder in carr and damp woods; other hosts include shrubs such as elder, and conifers including pine and juniper. It is also found on rotting wood and stumps, and more rarely on rocks. Altitudinal range: 0–520 m.

A high proportion of the records came from the 1950s to 1990s, and it appears that *Ptilidium pulcherrimum* spread in Britain in the 20th century before declining as SO₂ pollution reduced. The small size of many colonies in southern England suggests that they may have been short-lived populations originating from long-distance dispersal of

spores, perhaps from Scandinavia. Similarly, there are only two Irish records, made in 1953 and 2012, again suggesting transient colonisation from Britain (or even Scandinavia) rather than from an established Irish population. Some haplotypes of *P. pulcherrimum* are shared between Europe and N America, supporting the suggestion that successful long-distance dispersal is possible in this species (Kreier *et al.*, 2010).

Dioicous; sporophytes are seldom reported in Britain, but may be overlooked at least in eastern Scotland, recorded from April to August. They were produced regularly in a birchwood in Glen Doll, Angus (Duncan, 1966). It is known to be highly fertile in N America and in northern Europe. A Swedish colony studied by Söderström & Jonsson (1989) produced 68,500 spores per square metre of forest annually. There is no specialised method of vegetative dispersal.



Circumpolar Boreal-montane. Widely distributed in the boreal and montane regions of Europe, extending eastwards into Russia; Siberia, Tajikistan, China, Korea, Japan and Nepal. N America.

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