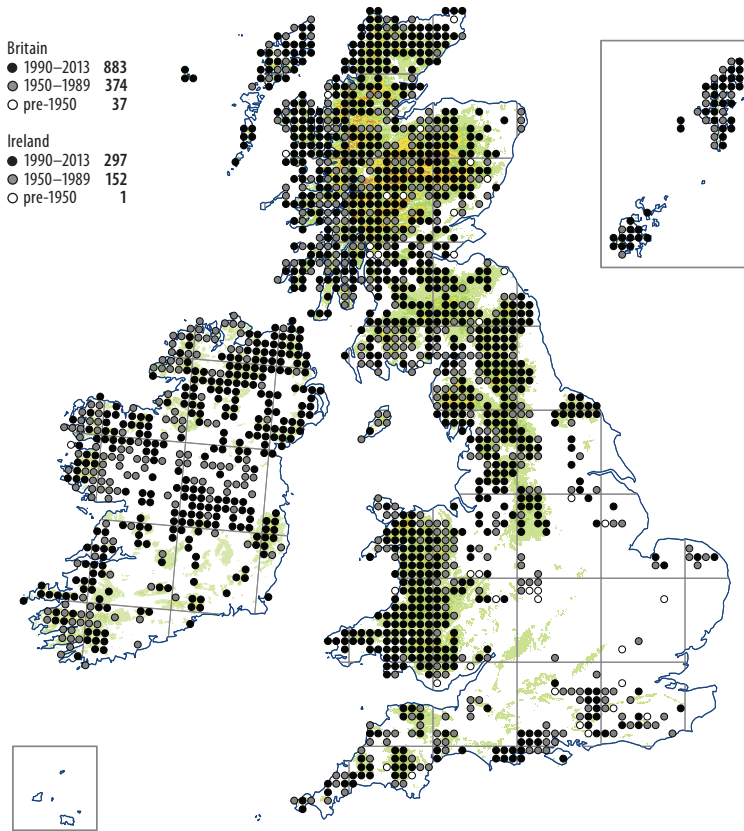


Sphagnum papillosum



Its ochre tussocks are often abundant on open bogs and boggy moorland, especially on deep wet peat, where it may form hummocks with *Sphagnum capillifolium* but also occurs in flat carpets. In high-rainfall areas of the north and west, it extends to a wide range of other acid peaty habitats, including boggy grassland, wet heaths, ditches, flushed peaty banks and weakly minerotrophic mires. Dense patches of *S. papillosum* often form in slightly flushed mires early in the transition from fen to bog, supporting bog plants such as *Eriophorum vaginatum* that are otherwise absent from mineral-rich fen. It is intolerant of shade and is absent from all but the most open woodland. It prefers more acid ground than *S. palustre*; the two rarely grow intermixed. Altitudinal range: 0–1100 m.

Sphagnum capillifolium, *S. papillosum* and *Erica tetralix* are characteristic species of bog peat. A bog where they are abundant is probably in good condition. *S. papillosum* is sensitive to air pollution. It is now largely absent from blanket peat in the South Pennines, but peat deposits show that it was abundant there until the Industrial Revolution. From a human perspective, *S. papillosum* is perhaps the most important bryophyte in Britain and Ireland. It is highly resistant to decay (Clymo & Hayward, 1982), with the result that its remains accumulate in peat deposits, often being the major component. In the fresh state, it is especially suitable for wound dressings (Riegler, 1989; Fisk, 1992).

Dioicous; capsules are occasional, August.

European Boreo-temperate. All Europe except the south, most abundant in the boreal zone. Discontinuously circumboreal, being absent from the continental interior of N America and from C Siberia.

M.O. Hill

