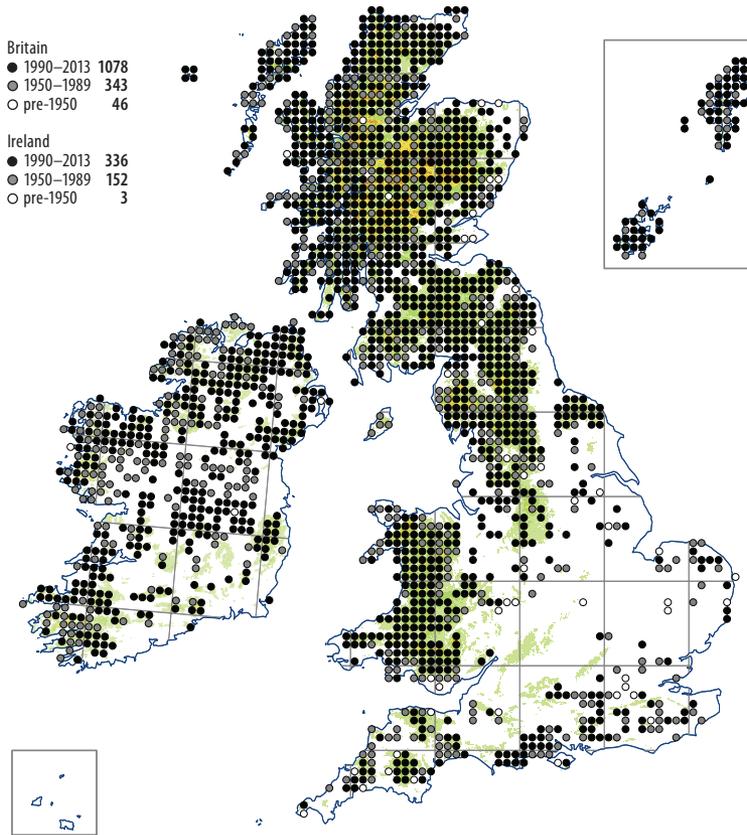


Sphagnum capillifolium



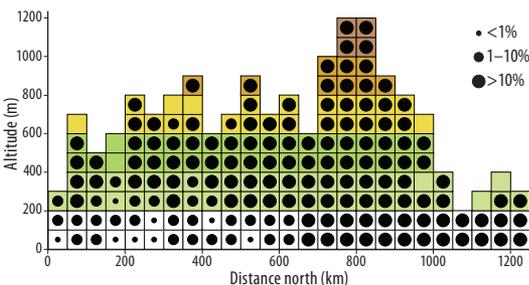
Like its common associate *Sphagnum papillosum*, it is most abundant on deep-peat bogs, including raised bogs, valley bogs and blanket bogs, where it forms conspicuous tussocks among Ericaceae and Cyperaceae. In upland areas it also occurs on tussocky moorland, on bouldery slopes, at the edge of flushes, on sheltered banks, and in light woodland, where it generally commoner than *S. quinquefarium*, even on well-drained banks. Altitudinal range: 0–1150 m.

Sphagnum capillifolium is, together with *S. papillosum* and *S. magellanicum* a significant peat former. On Carbury Bog in Ireland, it was the main peat former from 1420 to 1640 (van Geel & Middelorp, 1988), but in general it contributes less to peat than *S. papillosum*, probably because it decays faster (Clymo & Hayward, 1982). Like *S. papillosum* it is sensitive to SO₂ pollution and disappeared from the blanket

bogs of the South Pennines at the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Monoicous or dioicous; capsules are occasional.

The map shows the distribution of *S. capillifolium* s.l., because subsp. *capillifolium* and subsp. *rubellum* have not been recorded with sufficient consistency to be mapped separately. They hover on the edge of being species. They hybridise, but intermediates are much less frequent than the parent taxa. Cronberg (1997) made a genetic analysis of material from eight British sites, and found subsp. *capillifolium* at only one, a blanket bog in the Pennines. Out of 45 stems studied from that site, 20 were subsp. *rubellum*, 24 were subsp. *capillifolium* and one was intermediate. Since 2000, subsp. *capillifolium* has been recorded from many sites in Britain and Ireland but does not appear to have a different distribution from subsp. *rubellum*. At most of its Welsh bog sites subsp. *capillifolium* grows as a few hummocks whereas subsp. *rubellum* is abundant.



Circumpolar Boreo-temperate. N and C Europe south to the Pyrenees, Alps and Caucasus. Widespread across northern Asia and northern N America.

M.O. Hill