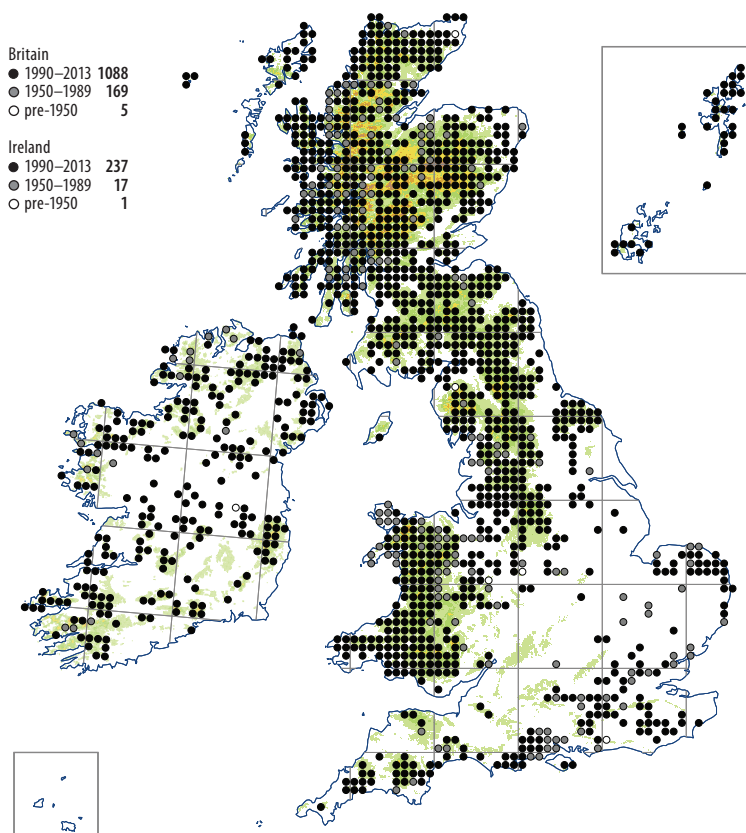


# Sphagnum fallax



Very common and often abundant in a wide range of permanently moist or wet acid habitats. It is particularly plentiful as wide carpets among *Juncus effusus* in wet fields and on valley bottoms, but also occurs in bogs, by streams, in woods, on flushed banks, in ditches, in swamps, and generally on wet moorland. In moorland pools it forms floating and often treacherous rafts. In terrestrial habitats, it is characteristic of flushed ground but does not require enrichment with bases; indeed, it is often abundant in runnels on ombrotrophic bogs and on the most acid moorland, surviving even in highly polluted parts of the Pennines. Altitudinal range: 0–960 m.

A variable species, with clones that may look strikingly different in the field. Segregates *Sphagnum brevifolium* and *S. isoviitae* distinguished by Flatberg (1992, 1993) both occur in Britain but are not recognised here. A genetic study (Såstad, Stenøien & Flatberg, 1999) found that *S. isoviitae* appeared to interbreed freely with *S. fallax*; the evidence for interbreeding between *S. brevifolium* and *S. fallax* was less clear.

European Boreo-temperate, mainly in oceanic and suboceanic regions, scarce or absent in continental interiors. All Europe except the south. NE Turkey. Western and eastern Asia. Western and eastern N America.

Diocious; capsules are occasional, summer.

M.O. Hill

