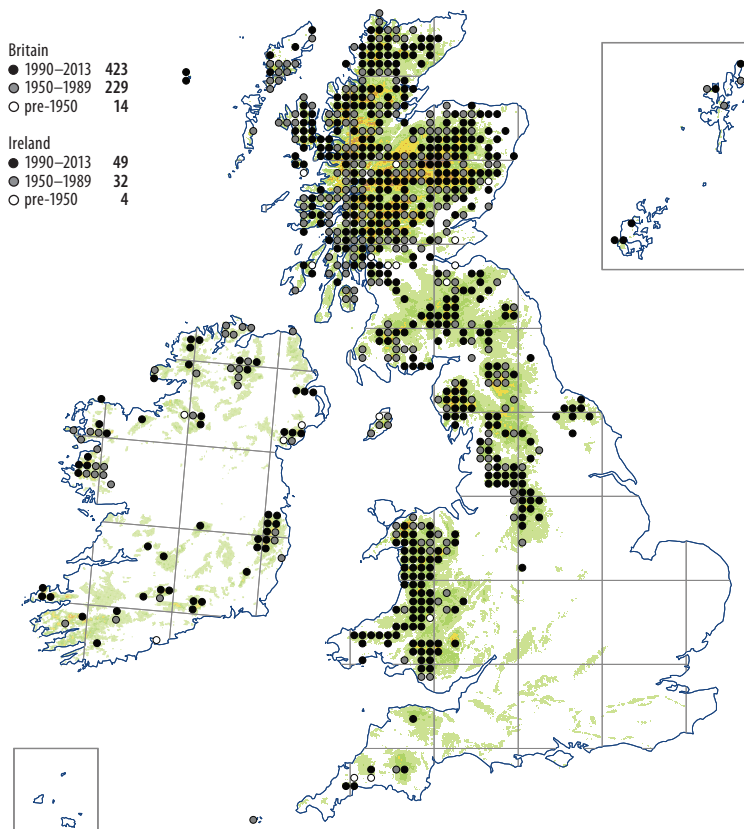


Oligotrichum hercynicum

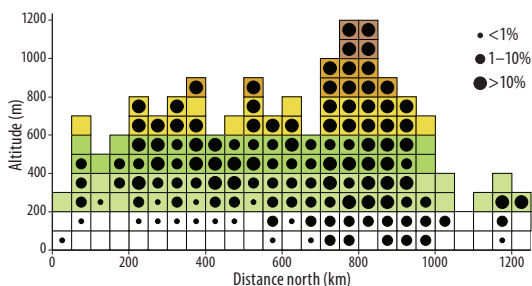


A calcifuge species of bare and open ground that is moist or seasonally dry, mainly in the uplands and mountains, on mineral soils, peaty grit and decaying rocks. Habitats include vertical eroded banks, shingle and detritus by streams, soil slopes, slumps and landslips, the sides of gullies, stony screes, gravelly and stony footpaths and tracksides, and occasionally lake margins where it may be intermittently inundated. On the high mountains it extends into areas of late snow-lie and fell-fields. It colonises old quarries and sandy or gritty mine spoil, and tracks and banks in upland forestry plantations. Associates include other pioneer species, such as *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Nardia scalaris*, *Ditrichum heteromallum*, *Pogonatum urnigerum* and *Pohlia annotina*. Altitudinal range: 35–1340 m.

Although always common in mountainous areas it has probably increased at lower altitudes on roads and banks in forestry plantations. There was an unexplained dip in the records in the 1980s, but the trend has increased since then, largely because of more intensive recording in some upland areas.

Dioicous; capsules are rare in the southern part of its range, sporadic elsewhere but sometimes locally abundant, mature in summer.

Circumpolar Boreo-arctic montane. In Europe frequent in the mountains of central regions and throughout the northern countries, including Iceland but not Svalbard, south to the Pyrenees and Bulgaria, east to the Ural mountains. Turkey, Caucasus, Siberia, E Asia, Japan. N America south to Oregon and Nova Scotia, Greenland.



D.G. Long, rev. T.L. Blockeel