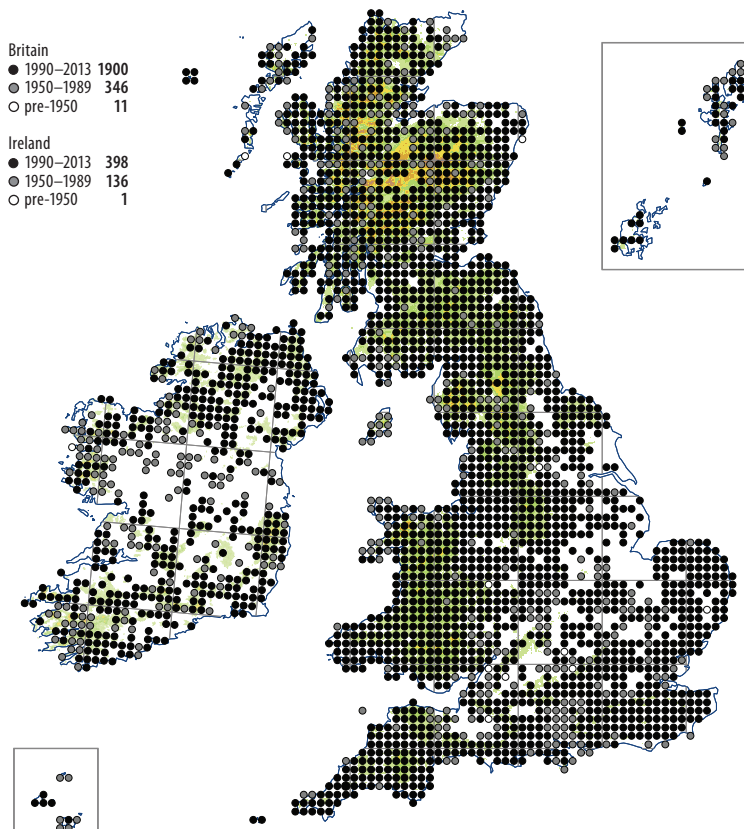


## Polytrichastrum formosum



A typical species of neutral to acid woodland, especially under birch, oak, beech and conifers, on poorer soils and raw humus, and on well-rotted logs and stumps, often with *Dicranella heteromalla*, *Kindbergia praelonga* and *Mnium hornum*. It extends to woodlands on calcareous substrates but is limited there to rotten wood or niches where the soil is leached, as around the bases of old trees. It is widespread in more open habitats, occurring commonly in unimproved acid grasslands, lowland heaths, moorlands and more rarely higher ground in the mountains, growing on peat and acid humus, and in quite rocky places such as block screes and rocky slopes, including turf over limestone and other basic rocks. It is able to colonise old earthy wall tops, quarries, mine spoil and other post-industrial sites, and is occasionally found in turf in ancient lawns and on old graves in churchyards. It sometimes grows with *Polytrichastrum*

*longisetum* but prefers more stable and better drained situations; in upland areas it often occurs with common pleurocarpous mosses such as *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Plagiothecium undulatum* and *Thuidium tamariscinum*. Altitudinal range: 0–850 m.

Dioicous; capsules are frequent, mature in early summer.

Circumpolar Boreo-temperate. Throughout much of Europe, but rare in the Arctic (not on Svalbard), south to the mountains of the Mediterranean region. Macaronesia, N Africa (Algeria). Turkey, Syria. Circumboreal, south to New Guinea in Asia. In N America mainly represented by var. *densifolium* (Wilson ex Mitt.) Osada. Southern S America. Southern Africa. Australia, New Zealand.

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