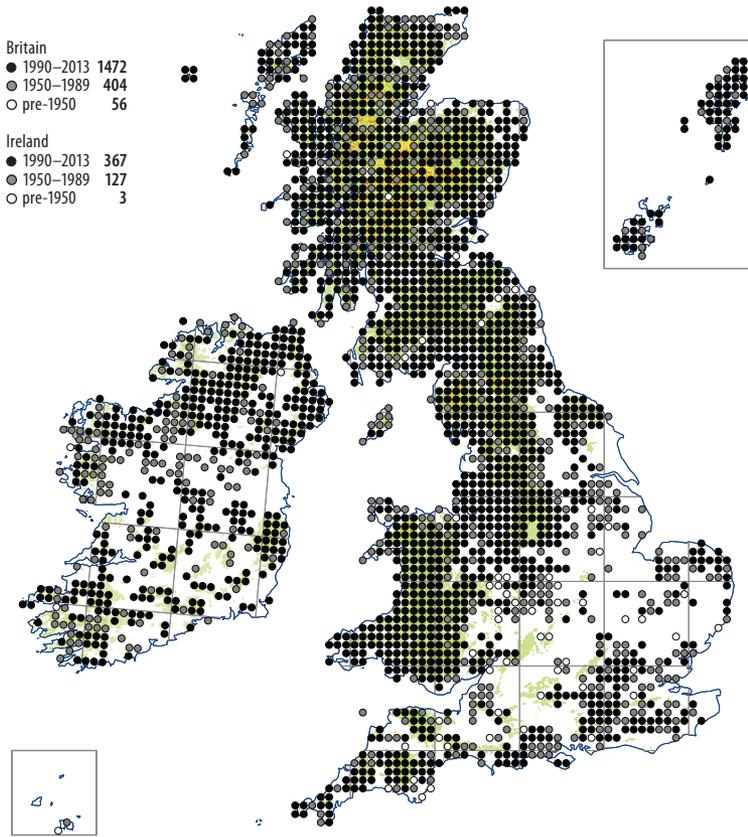


# *Polytrichum commune* var. *commune*



In a wide range of acid habitats, usually in wet and waterlogged places. It is common in acid flushes, on wet heath and on blanket bog, often with rushes and cotton-grass and numerous *Sphagnum* species, including *S. denticulatum*, *S. fallax*, *S. fimbriatum* and *S. palustre*. It occurs widely in other places on heaths and moorlands and their fringes, such as wet pastures, ditches, lake margins, pools, wet rock ledges and on the banks of streams, where it may grow on stony ground and among boulders. It also widespread in birch and willow carr and other wet acid woodlands. Though characteristic of wet ground, it sometimes colonises drier habitats on peaty tracks, sandy heathland banks, old pits and on humus and peaty soil in woodland. It is tolerant of moderate atmospheric pollution and is known from old colliery waste, mine spoil and other post-industrial sites such as disused railways. Altitudinal range: 0–1035 m.

Recent recording has filled many gaps in its distribution, especially in Ireland and N Scotland.

Forms on drier ground are easily overlooked as *Polytrichastrum formosum*, and are probably under-recorded, but this is unlikely to have a significant impact on the overall distribution. Records not assigned to a named variety have been mapped as var. *commune*.

Dioicous; capsules are frequent, mature in summer.

Circumpolar Wide-boreal. In Europe north to Iceland and Arctic Russia, but not Svalbard, commonest in the higher-rainfall regions of the north and west, rare in the Mediterranean region (south to Crete) and in calcareous districts. Macaronesia, N Africa (Algeria, Morocco). SW Asia. Widespread across the Northern Hemisphere. Mexico, S America. C and S Africa. Australia, New Zealand.

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

