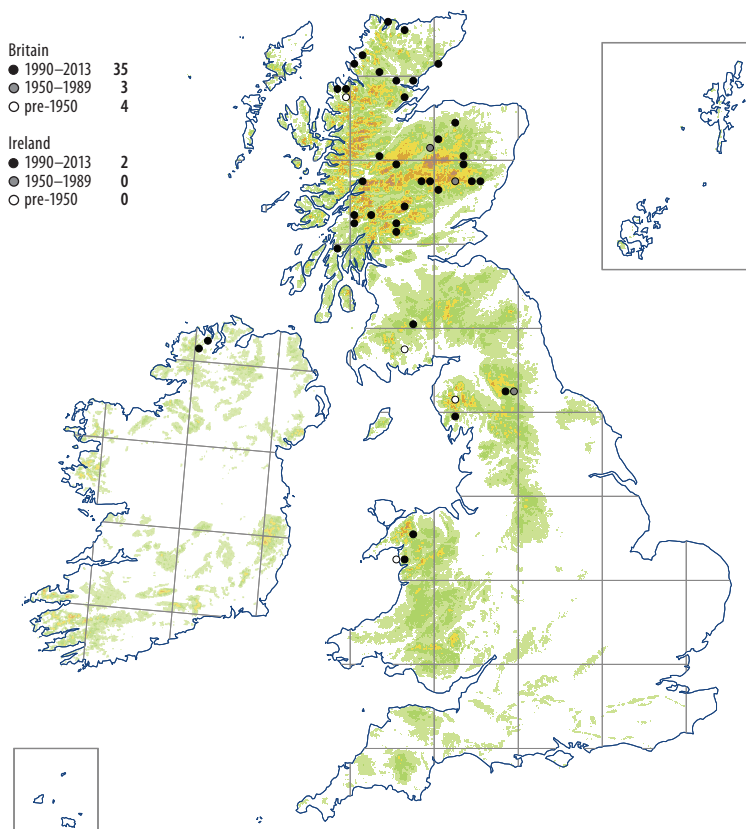


Schistidium agassizii



An aquatic or subaquatic moss of base-rich to slightly acid substrates, often growing low down in the riparian zone and submerged for long periods. In Scotland and northern England its characteristic habitat is on the rocks and stones of fast-flowing rivers and large streams. Holmes (1976) found that in the River Tees it was able to grow in places subject to fierce currents, including powerful waterfalls, though it also occurs in quieter waters. Observations by S.D.S. Bosanquet in Wales suggest that it favours the tops of waterfalls rather than the pounding water at their base. It grows with other riparian species such as *Cinclidotus fontinaloides*, *Fontinalis antipyretica*, *Schistidium platyphyllum*, *Sciuro-hypnum plumosum* and the lichen *Dermatocarpon luridum*, and in more acid sites with *Marsupella emarginata* and *Racomitrium aciculare*. It is commonly found on unshaded river banks, but has also been recorded in wooded ravines. At one of

its Irish sites it occurs on the sloping surface of a schistose boulder on a lake margin. Other rock types include basalt and granite. On Ben Lawers, which was the source of the first British record, it occurs on rocks in a shallow lochan which periodically dries out. Associates there include *Carex saxatilis*, *Marsupella emarginata*, *Scapania undulata* and *Sarmentypnum sarmentosum*. Similarly it has been recorded on flushed acid rock outcrops in southern Scotland. Altitudinal range: 10–1010 m.

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of records in recent years, but this is clearly due to greater awareness and systematic searching rather than an actual increase in occurrence. Even though it is one of our most distinctive *Schistidium* species it is readily overlooked because of its subaquatic habitat, especially when growing in short tufts.

Autoicous; capsules are occasional.

European Boreal-montane. In Europe north to Iceland and Svalbard, east to the Urals, scattered in C Europe, rare in the Mediterranean mountains. Reported from Macaronesia (Madeira) and N Africa. Turkey, Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Siberia; E Asia. N America south to California and Colorado.

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