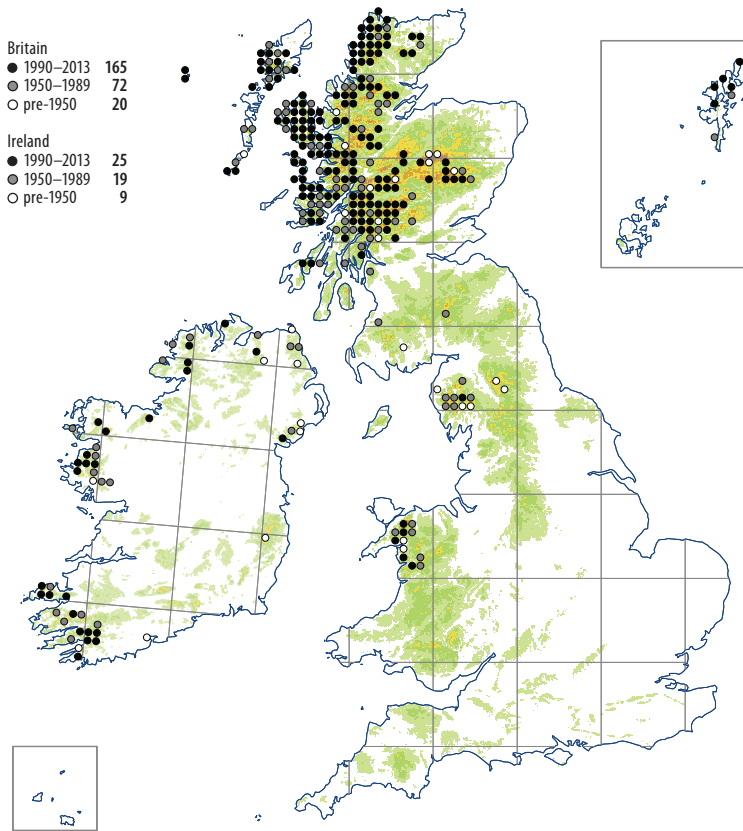


Racomitrium ellipticum



Typically forming small dark green tufts on mountain rock faces that are usually slightly basic, most commonly on igneous and metamorphic strata such as gneiss and basalt. It is characteristic of slabby rocks, less often on the vertical faces of montane crags that are sheltered from direct sunlight and where there is some seepage or periodic irrigation. Many sites are therefore in north-facing mountain corries, but it has also been recorded on rocks in block litter, and on boulders by streams and lochs. It is also a frequent component of the flora in the inundation zone of burns. *Andreaea alpina* and *Blindia acuta* are common associates, and it may be accompanied by small liverworts such as *Hygrobiella laxifolia* and *Marsupella emarginata*. Altitudinal range: 10–990 m.

The records show an increasing trend since 1990, probably due to recording in W Scotland, where many gaps in its distribution have been filled.

Dioicous; capsules are produced freely, mature in early summer.

Oceanic Boreal-montane. W Europe, from Portugal and Spain north to Iceland, the Faeroes, SW Norway and Jan Mayen. Canary Islands. Also recently reported from Turkey (Giresun), and listed for Japan by Iwatsuki (2004).

M.C.F. Proctor, rev. T.L. Blockeel

