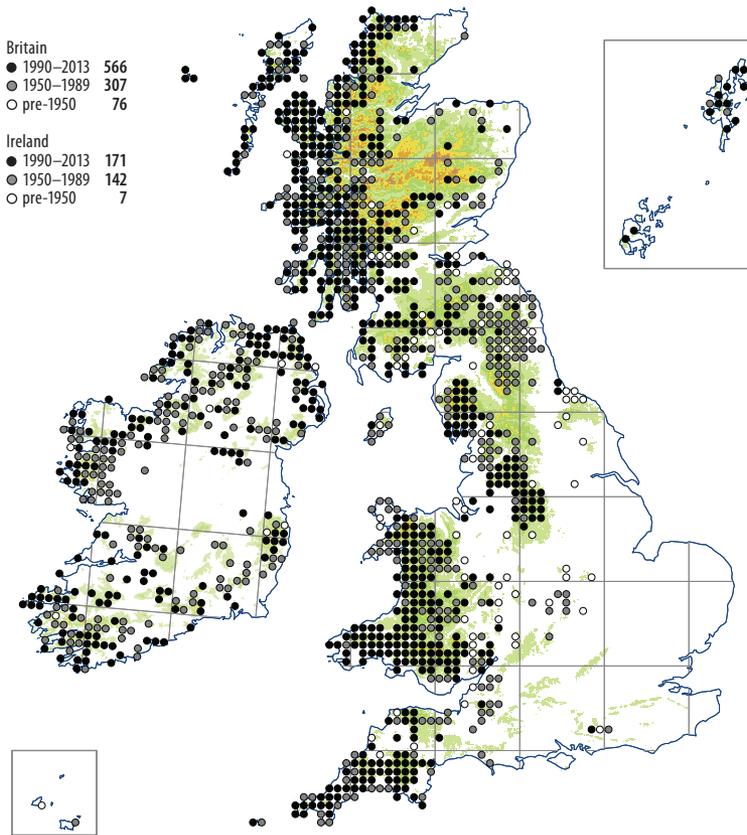


Ptychomitrium polyphyllum



Alocally frequent and conspicuous plant in the north and west, occurring as dense cushions in small crevices and hollows on the tops of dry, sun-exposed or slightly shaded, acid or mildly basic rocks, often where there is a thin cover of humus. It is found on slate, schist, gabbro, basalt, peridotite, granite and sandstone but is largely absent from limestone. Typical habitats are detached angular boulders and granite tors, stone walls, bridges, Cornish hedges and roadside rocks. *Frullania tamarisci*, *Hedwigia stellata*, *Hypnum cupressiforme*, *Racomitrium aciculare*, *R. fasciculare*, *R. heterostichum* and *R. lanuginosum* are common associates. It also occurs occasionally in old quarries and on mine waste, on coastal rocks, and on dry boulders in lightly shaded areas in wooded valleys. Near the southern and eastern edge of its range it is more often found in man-made habitats than on natural rock outcrops, even colonising railway ballast in

some lowland counties. In the South Pennines and parts of S Wales it is found mainly on mortared gritstone walls, notably those constructed around reservoirs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The mortar probably acted as a buffer against acidity when levels of SO₂ pollution were high. Though usually found on acid substrates, its tolerance of mildly basic conditions is indicated by several records from old concrete. Altitudinal range: 0–700 m.

Autoicous; capsules are usually abundant, mature in spring and early summer; protonemal gemmae are produced in culture (Pressel, 2007).

Oceanic Southern-temperate. W Europe, from Portugal and Corsica north to the Faeroes and SW Norway, east to S Sweden, Slovenia and Croatia. Azores, Canaries, Madeira.

H.J.B. Birks, rev. T.L. Blockeel

