Blasia pusilla

Britain
- ● 1990–2013 **325**
- ● 1950–1989 **300**
- ○ pre-1950 **78**

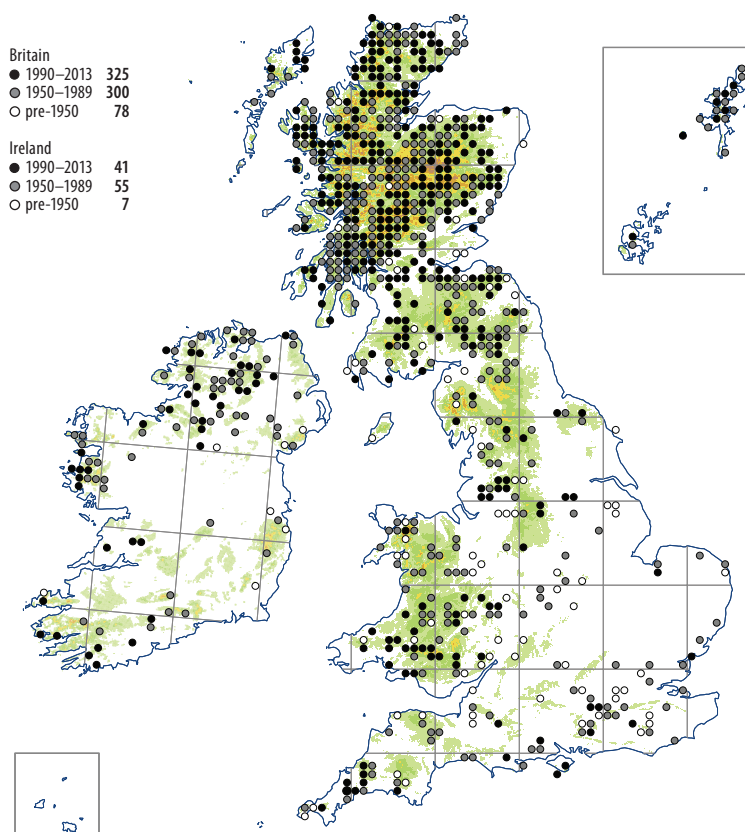**Ireland**
- ● 1990–2013 **41**
- ● 1950–1989 **55**
- ○ pre-1950 **7**

A locally abundant but rather unpredictable species of moist, non-calcareous soil on damp tracks, forestry tracks and roadsides, in old quarries and clay pits, on waste ground, in ditches and, occasionally, arable fields. Regular associates include *Fossombronia wondraczekii*, *Nardia scalaris*, *Scapania irrigua*, *Solenostoma gracillimum*, *Pogonatum urnigerum* and *Pohlia annotina*. It is less common in natural habitats, chiefly found amongst gravel by streams and rivers, on lake shores, on wet shale banks, or on slumped ground and solifluction terraces in the uplands, where *Ditrichum heteromallum* and *Oligotrichum hercynicum* often grow alongside. Most colonies in the southern half of England and Wales are small, and *Blasia* is distinctly more abundant and easily found in Scotland. Altitudinal range: 5–740 m.

Records suggest a slight decline in *Blasia*, which is especially marked in England but is still apparent compared with the 1960s in NW Britain.

Dioicous. Often fertile; capsules are occasional. Archegonia and antheridia are produced from May to July and, uniquely, the young sporophyte overwinters in the tissues of the dead gametophyte, maturing in March and April. Gametophytes which lack sporophytes may live through the winter. Stellate gemmae, or ovoid gemmae in gemma receptacles, or both, are almost always present. The stellate gemmae are short-lived, starch-rich, germinate in the summer months and carry the *Nostoc*-symbiont. The ovoid gemmae retain viability for several months and have reserves of lipid and protein rather than starch; they tend to be released when the receptacles decay in late summer and autumn and germinate the following spring to produce thalli which are initially *Nostoc*-free (Duckett & Renzaglia, 1993).

Circumpolar Boreo-temperate. Found in most of Europe but rare in the south; Siberia, Russian Far East, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Himalaya; N America, Greenland.

A.C. Crundwell, rev. S.D.S. Bosanquet & C.D. Preston

- • <1%
- ● 1–10%
- ● >10%