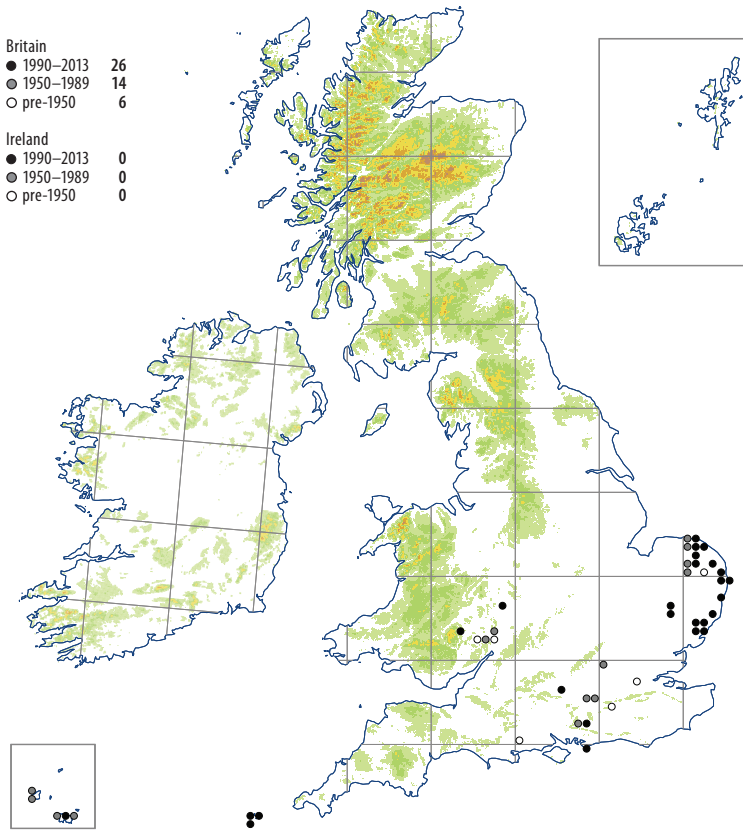


Sphaerocarpos texanus



A weed of cultivated ground, growing on non-calcareous loam or sandy soil in neglected gardens, allotments, nurseries, fallow land, cereal stubble and fields of cabbages, cauliflowers, clover, maize, potatoes, rape, rhubarb, sugar beet, turnips and (in the Isles of Scilly) flowers. It is also recorded from hedgebanks, pathsides, soil between paving slabs, waste ground and the floor of a disused quarry. It is often accompanied by *Sphaerocarpos michelii*, which has similar ecological requirements. Altitudinal range: 0–95 m.

This species has been discovered at a slightly greater proportion of new sites than *S. michelii*, especially in Norfolk but, like *S. michelii*, is likely to be in overall decline on arable land because of changing farming practices.

Dioicous. Sporophytes are abundant, maturing from December to June. Spores are shed in tetrads of two males and two females.

Probably slightly under-recorded because of the need for mature sporophytes for identification. DNA Barcoding indicates that European and N American *S. texanus* are genetically distinct and should be recognised as separate species (Bell *et al.*, 2013).

Mediterranean-Atlantic. The same *Sphaerocarpos* that grows in Britain is also found in central and southern Europe, reaching its northern limit in Britain; Macaronesia; N Africa; Turkey, Lebanon. *S. texanus* s.s. is known from southern N America, S America and Australia.

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