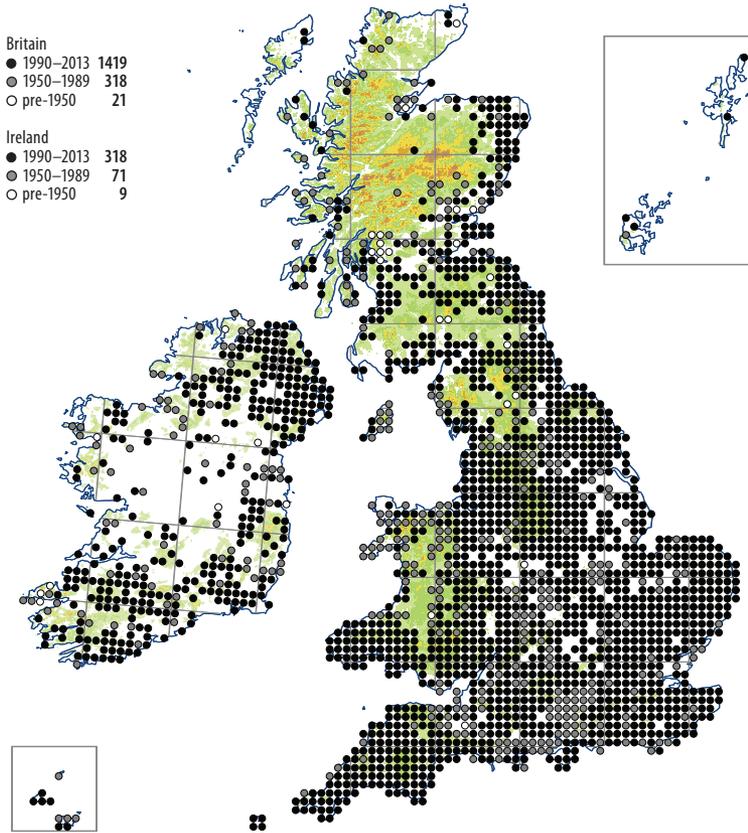


# Lunularia cruciata



Widespread as a weed of paths, trampled soil, flower-pots and the damp bases of walls, often found in streets, gardens, churchyards and greenhouses, and sometimes on disused mines. It also occurs in more natural communities, especially in south-western parts of England and Wales: most characteristically on the banks of streams and rivers but also on moist rock outcrops, in open woodland and on woodland rides. Associates on lane banks in Pembrokeshire include *Epipterygium tozeri*, *Fissidens viridulus* and *Oxyrrhynchium pumilum*, and *Lunularia* appears to be a natural component of the sub-Mediterranean flora there (Bosanquet, 2010). Indeed *Lunularia* could be native in England and Wales; it has been found amongst bryophyte material used to plug the seams of a Bronze Age canoe discovered in Lincolnshire, and it was known to Ray (1686) in Essex. In Scotland it is certainly an established introduction. Altitudinal range: 0–370 m.

The records of *Lunularia* suggest an upward trend in lowland parts of Britain and a relatively stable population in upland areas. Considerable gains are apparent in eastern Britain compared with the 1991–1994 Atlas, although they may represent a switch in recorders' attention towards less natural habitats. Analysis of a group of common ruderal bryophytes shows only a slightly greater increase in *Lunularia* than in most species.

Dioicous. Sex organs tend to develop after mild winters; severe frost damages the thalli, and receptacles then fail to develop. Male plants are less frequent than females, and both sexes appear to produce sex organs more frequently in south-western parts of Britain and Ireland. Sporophytes are very rare, August to November; reproduction is primarily by gemmae, which are almost always present.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Cosmopolitan; the native range of *Lunularia*, like that of many synanthropic weeds, cannot be delimited, but it was probably centred on the Mediterranean.

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