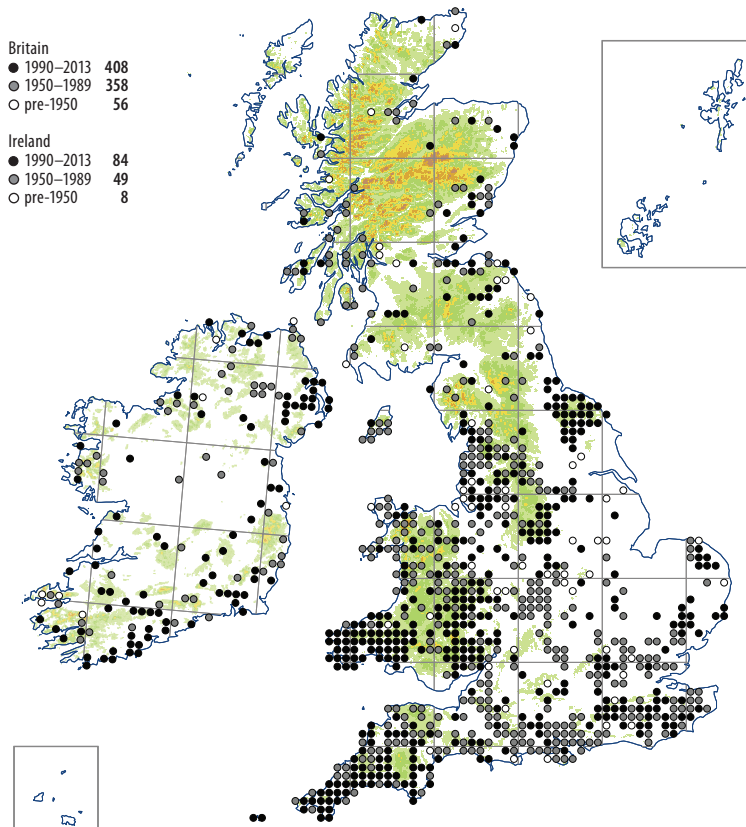


Fossombronia pusilla



A pioneer species of disturbed, damp, acid soil in a wide variety of habitats including roadsides and tracksides, ditch, stream and river banks, marshy pastures and stubble fields. It is a characteristic member of the bryophyte flora of periodically disturbed woodland rides, where associates include *Riccardia chamedryfolia*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Philonotis fontana* and *Pohlia* species. It shows some preference for loams and clays as opposed to peaty and sandy substrates and as a decided calcifuge is absent from soils derived from chalk and limestone. Arable populations are found almost exclusively in the north-western *Tortula truncata*–*Anthoceros* assemblage and *Dicranella staphylina*–*Riccia glauca* assemblage (Preston *et al.*, 2010). Altitudinal range: 0–460 m.

There has been a gradual decline in *Fossombronia pusilla* in both lowland and upland areas. The Survey of the Bryophytes of Arable Land produced a smaller spike of records for this species than for most other arable bryophytes analysed.

Monoicous. Sporophytes are common, produced throughout the year in areas of heavier rainfall but ripening from autumn to spring in drier districts.

The map is very patchy because many records prior to the separation of *F. maritima* can only be assigned to *F. pusilla* *s.l.* Even when these records are added, it is clear that some parts of Britain are much more favourable for *F. pusilla* than others.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. W, C and S Europe. Turkey, N Africa, Macaronesia, tropical Africa; China, Himalaya, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, New Guinea; Australia, New Zealand; California.

C.D. Preston, rev. S.D.S. Bosanquet

