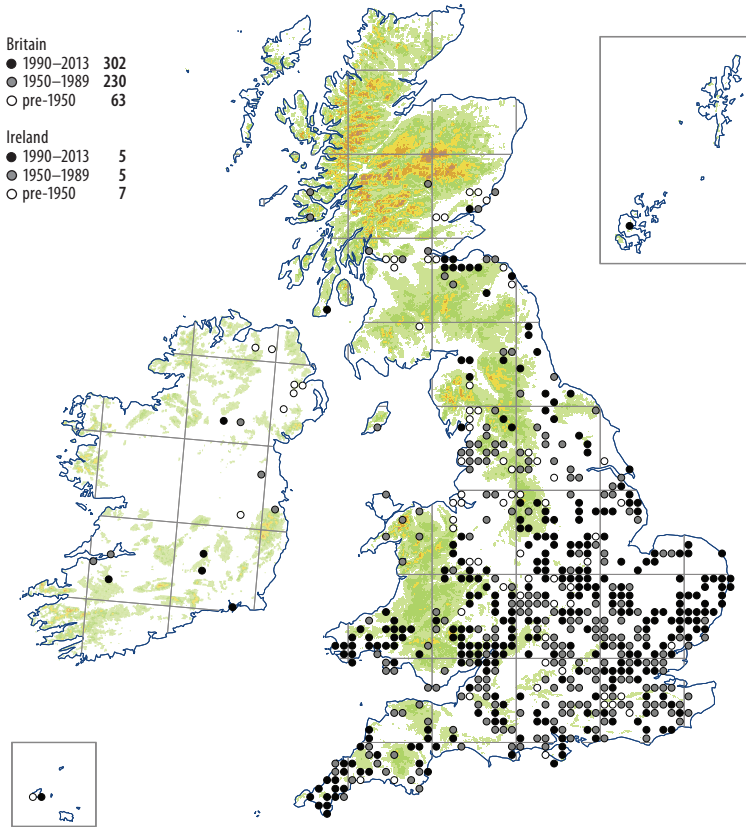


Fissidens exilis



A small moss, usually mature in autumn and winter, and occurring as scattered shoots or in pure patches on neutral or acid loam or clayey soil. Its commonest habitat is on bare patches of soil in woodland, kept open by natural agencies or disturbance, including old mole-hills and the edges of paths and woodland rides. It frequently occurs with *Fissidens bryoides* and *F. taxifolius*. Outside woodland it occurs on sheltered banks, streamsides and in the damper parts of fallow fields and grass leys, rarely also on soil dumps and old workings. In the Pennines it has been found on a clayey vertical surface in a limestone sink-hole. It is occasional in ploughed fields, especially on heavy clay soils, and may then be associated with *Dicranella schreberiana*, *Ephemerum minutissimum*, *Weissia* spp. and other ephemerals. Populations are often ephemeral, but may be more permanent in established woodland. Altitudinal range: 0–470 m.

It is now more evenly recorded than in the 1991–1994 Atlas, but it is easily overlooked and its distribution is still a little biased towards intensively recorded counties.

Dioicous or autoicous; capsules are abundant, mainly in winter, but the season of mature capsules extends from autumn to spring.

European Temperate. Widespread but rather rare in Europe, north to C Norway and S Finland, absent from most of the Mediterranean region. Macaronesia (Canary Islands), N Africa (Algeria). Turkey, Caucasus, Russian Asia (S Siberia). Eastern N America.

A.J.E. Smith, rev. T.L. Blockeel

