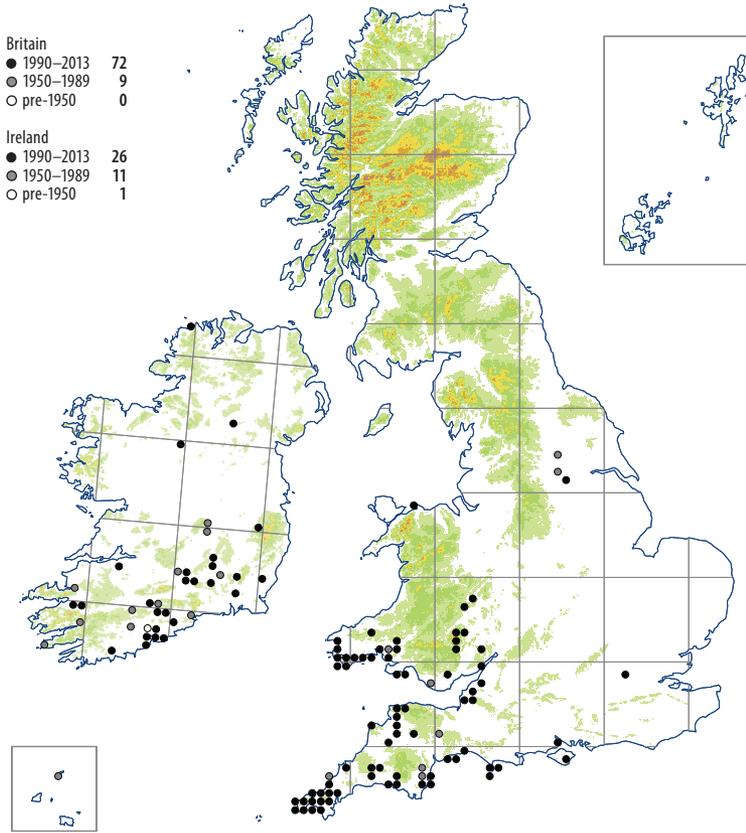


Gymnostomum viridulum



A minute moss growing on thin soil on and among limestone and other calcareous rocks, both in exposed places and in light to moderate shade. It occurs widely in natural and semi-natural habitats on rock outcrops, compacted scree and soil, earth on sea cliffs, and in old pits and quarries, but it is at least as common on the crumbling mortar of derelict buildings, bridges and other walls, and on limestone wall tops. Associates include *Aloina aloides*, *Barbula convoluta*, *Didymodon tophaceus*, *Gyroweisia tenuis*, *Pseudocrossidium revolutum* and *Trichostomum brachydontium*. On some coastal sites it is plentiful on damp calcareous sand dunes, or on sand over low rocks and mine spoil. Altitudinal range: 5–600 m.

The status of *Gymnostomum viridulum* had only recently been clarified when the 1991–1994 Atlas was published, and

the increased number of records since then is simply due to greater awareness.

Dioicous; mostly female. Male plants are more restricted and capsules have been recorded only from Cornwall, Pembrokeshire and a few localities in Ireland, mature in spring. Gemmae are frequent on the protonema and in the upper leaf axils (Whitehouse & Crundwell, 1991).

It was formerly confused with *G. calcareum* and was not recorded systematically until its distinguishing characters were documented by Whitehouse & Crundwell (1991). It had been collected near Cork, Ireland, in 1850 and near Tadcaster, England, in 1900. Mapped records prior to 1990 are based on herbarium specimens confirmed by Whitehouse & Crundwell (1992).

Mediterranean-Atlantic. S and W Europe, common in the Mediterranean region, extending north to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and Czech Republic. Macaronesia, N Africa and Somalia. SW Asia, east to Afghanistan. Western N America.

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