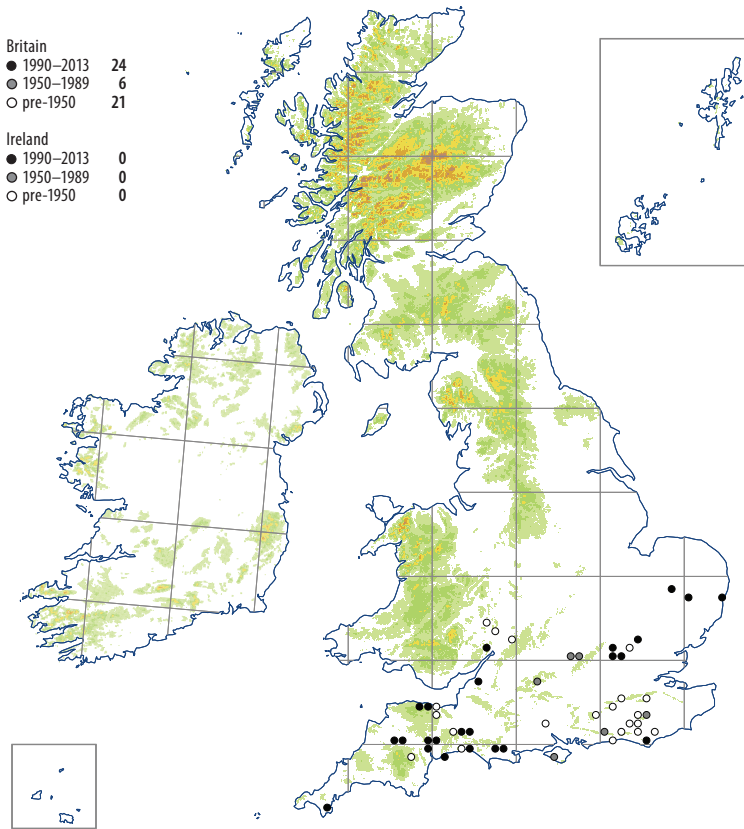


Leptodontium gemmascens



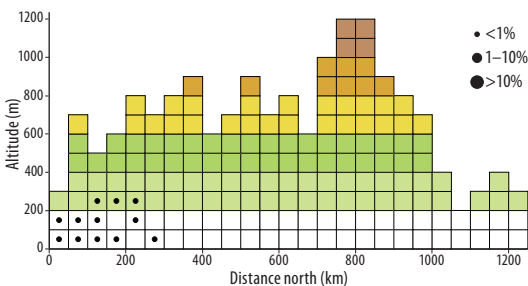
A species of decaying vegetation, characteristically on weathered thatched roofs but rarely also on grass tussocks and wood. Porley (2008b) recorded it on thatch that was only 5-years old, but on Exmoor Hedderson *et al.* (2003) found that it was most likely to occur on 10–15-year-old thatch; they found no detectable preference for thatch type (wheat straw or reed). According to Lansdown (2010) optimum conditions occur where there is some shading by trees, preferably overhanging the thatch on the northern or north-eastern pitch. Associates on thatch include *Campylopus introflexus*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Dicranoweisia cirrata*, *Dicranum scoparium* and *Hypnum cupressiforme*. The species has also been found in acid grassland and heath, where it occurs at the base of grassy tussocks, on decaying *Juncus*, and even on rabbit droppings. In these habitats associated species include *Ceratodon purpureus*,

Dicranum scoparium, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Pohlia nutans* and *Polytrichum juniperinum*. Altitudinal range: 0–200 m.

Although it has declined because of the scarcity of suitably decayed thatch and the use of galvanised netting on roofs, a recent survey of National Trust properties in SW England resulted in the discovery of six new sites (Lansdown, 2010). Most extant populations of the species are now on National Trust properties.

Dioicous; capsules and gametangia are unknown. Gemmae are abundant, produced in the leaf axils as well as on the leaf apices (Frahm, 1973).

Oceanic Temperate. W Europe, from Pyrenees to Denmark, very rare or overlooked. Outside Europe known only from islands in the subantarctic and southern Indian oceans.



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