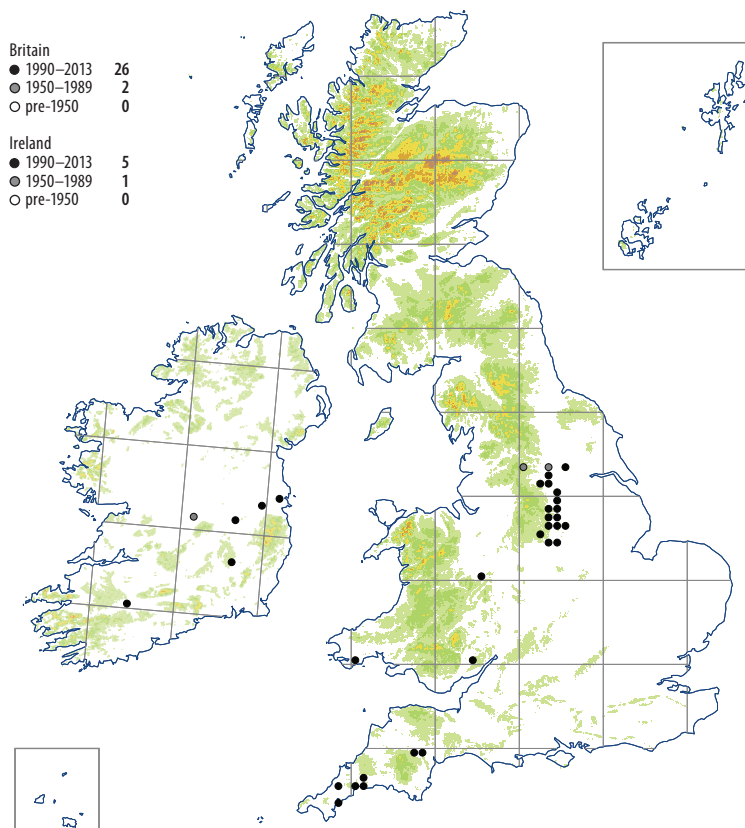


## Didymodon tomaculosus



This species occurs on moist soil in open, regularly disturbed habitats. Most records are from arable fields, although it has also been recorded from ground poached by cattle in pastures and from the margin of a reservoir. It is particularly characteristic of water-retentive neutral or slightly acid clay soils, though some records are from soils with a more sandy texture. On clay soils, it frequently grows with *Dicranella schreberiana*, *Pohlia melanodon* and occasionally *Pseudephemerum nitidum*, as well as with many other common arable field bryophytes. Altitudinal range: 0–150 m.

Many new sites have been recorded in recent years, but this can be attributed to greater awareness among bryologists, especially during the BBS survey of arable fields. It is unlikely that there has been any real change in overall occurrence.

Dioicous; capsules are unknown. Most populations are female or vegetative, but both male and female plants are known from Co. Dublin. *Didymodon tomaculosus* reproduces (and is spread) by means of rhizoidal tubers, which may occur in great abundance on young and vegetative shoots (Blockeel, 1981; Duckett *et al.*, 2004) and can sometimes be found on the protonema.

Mature female plants are not difficult to observe in the field, especially when they occur in quantity. However the species is often present only as small scattered sterile shoots, sometimes in very small numbers, and it is then difficult to find. Some records have been made only after examining lumps of soil under the microscope. It is therefore probable that it is an under-recorded species, though it does appear to be genuinely rare. The status of *D. tomaculosus* as a species is supported by molecular data (Werner *et al.*, 2005a). Its relationships are with the *D. acutus* group.

Suboceanic Temperate. *D. tomaculosus* is known elsewhere from at least two localities in Germany, and one in neighbouring Austria (J. Kučera, *pers. comm.*), but it is probably overlooked in continental Europe.

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