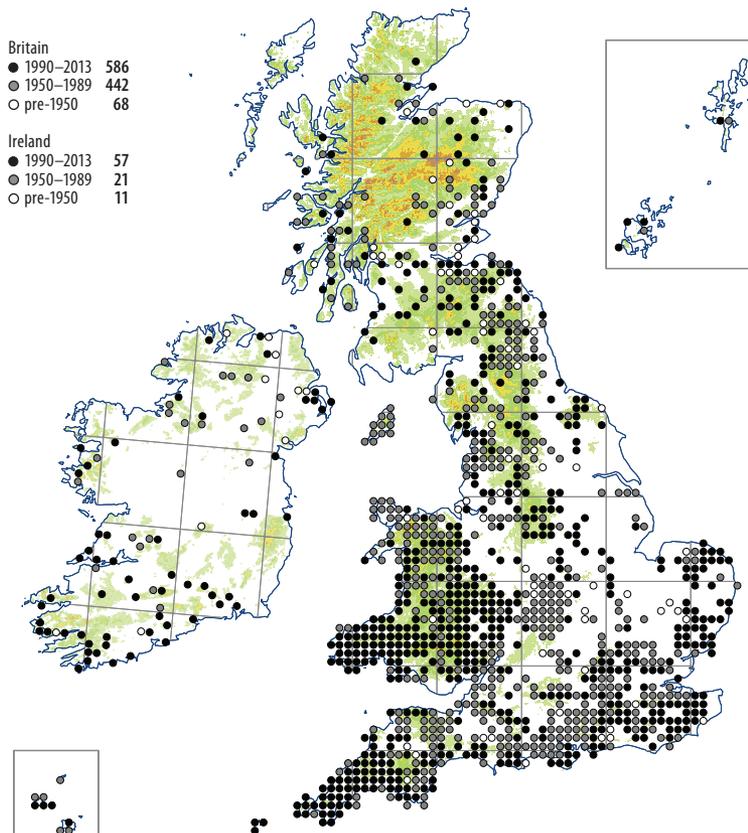


Pleuridium acuminatum

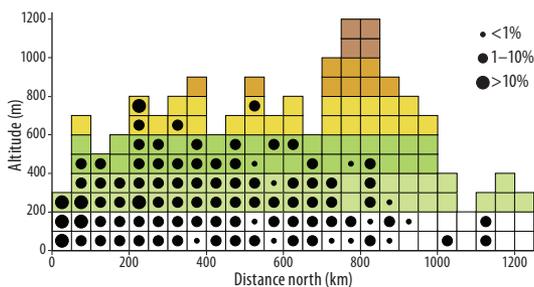


This calcifuge plant is a common pioneer species of bare patches of sandy, clayey or peaty soils, normally on well-drained substrates. It occurs more often in moderately stable habitats than those that are regularly disturbed. These include rough banks and ant-hills in pastures and by ponds, lanesides, stream and river banks, earthy rock ledges, bare patches on heathland, old quarries, and the sides of woodland rides and forest roads. It is also recorded from lawn edges and churchyards. Although it is sometimes a colonist in arable fields it is less common in this habitat than *Pleuridium subulatum* (Preston *et al.*, 2010). It is found typically in exposed to lightly shaded places, more rarely in moderate shade. Its many associates include tuberiferous species of *Bryum*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Pogonatum aloides*, *Pohlia lutescens* and *Trichodon cylindricus*. Altitudinal range: 0–680 m.

The high concentration of post-1990 records in well-recorded districts (e.g. Cornwall, S Wales) contrasts with the large proportion of older records elsewhere, and argues against a general decline.

Paroicous; capsules are abundant, mature in spring and summer. Rhizoidal tubers are frequent in specimens from nearby parts of Europe (Arts & Risse, 1988), and doubtless occur in Britain.

The two species of *Pleuridium* are often confused, but differences in the structure of the upper leaves appear to be constant and correlated with the position of the antheridia. Intermediates have been reported, but may possibly be hybrids. The occurrence of tubers in *P. acuminatum* but not *P. subulatum* also suggests that, in Europe, they are fairly distinct. *P. acuminatum* has possibly been over-recorded at the expense of *P. subulatum*, and the map is likely to contain some inaccuracies.



European Temperate. S, W and C Europe, from Portugal and the Mediterranean region to S Fennoscandia and Ukraine. Macaronesia, N Africa (Morocco, Algeria). Turkey, Cyprus; reported from E China. Eastern and western N America. Southern Africa. Western Australia.

R.A. Finch, rev. T.L. Blockeel