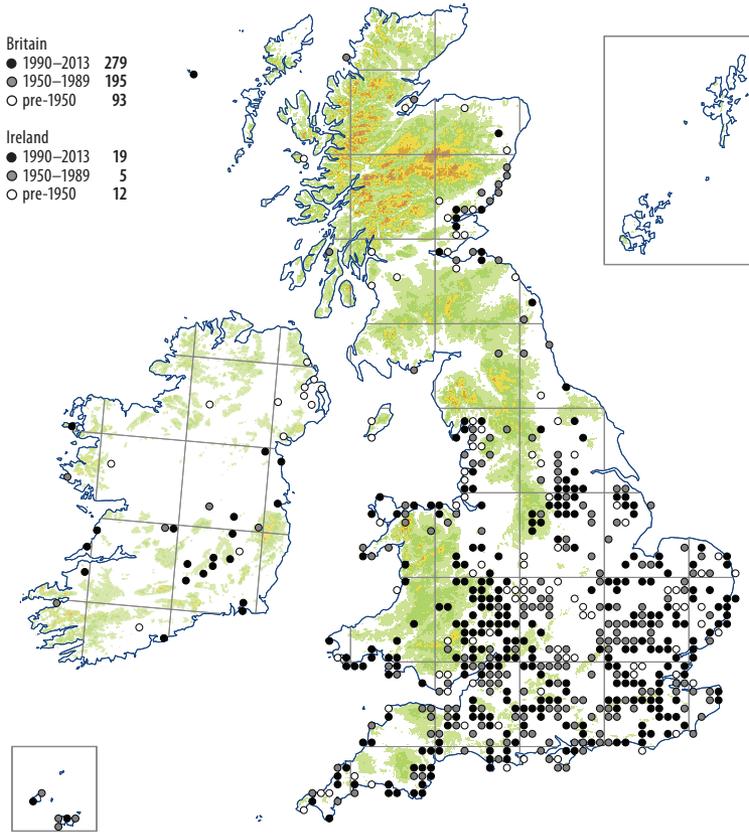


Tortula modica



An ephemeral moss found on calcareous to slightly acid soils on chalk, limestone, slaty and igneous rocks, clay, sandstone, sand and gravel. In semi-natural habitats it grows on bare earth on rock ledges (especially of limestone), in thin turf (including mole-hills and ant-hills), and on seaside banks and cliffs. It is also frequent on disturbed soils in stubble fields, roadside banks, quarries, churchyards, garden paths, flower beds, waste ground and mud by coastal dykes and on low ridges in saltmarshes. On calcareous rock ledges associates include *Tortula lanceola* and *T. protobryoides*, on chalk *Microbryum* spp., and in coastal habitats *Hennediella heimii*. It formerly occurred widely on earth-capped walls. Altitudinal range: 0–290 m.

A slightly increasing trend in records reflects more assiduous recording in ruderal habitats and stubble fields.

Autoicous; capsules are abundant, maturing from November to June, rarely in other seasons. Rhizoidal tubers are frequent in continental Europe and have been observed in material from the Peak District; they remain viable up to five years in dry storage (Risse, 1985a; Arts, 1987b).

This is a rather critical taxon. Coastal plants formerly known as *Pottia littoralis* Mitt. may merit recognition as a distinct species (*Tortula pallida* (Lindb.) R.H. Zander) but the latter is a poorly defined taxon that requires further investigation. In some habitats, e.g. limestone rock ledges, *T. modica* has consistently narrow capsules and is distinctive, but elsewhere it often appears to intergrade with *T. truncata*. The map is likely to contain significant errors.

Circumpolar Temperate. Widespread in Europe from the Mediterranean region north to Iceland, S Scandinavia and NW Russia, east to the S Urals. N Africa, Turkey, Near East, Iran, C and E Asia, Japan. Eastern N America, Chile (perhaps introduced).

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