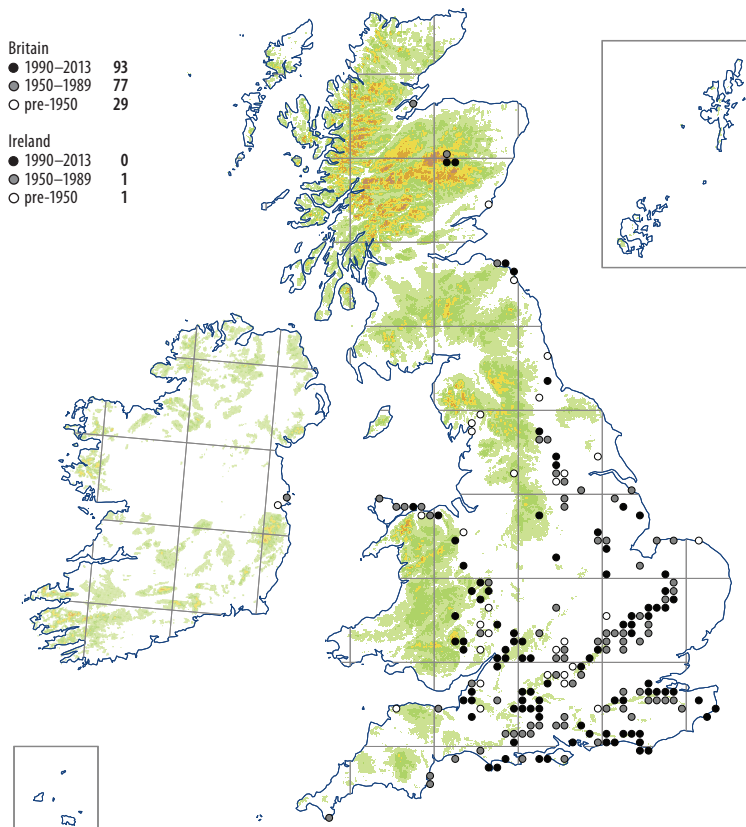


Microbryum curvicolium



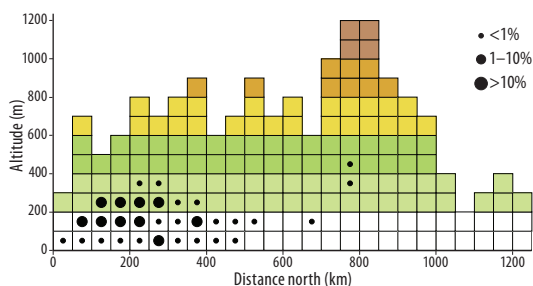
A winter annual of calcareous ground, growing in sites kept open by drought or trampling, or colonising soil after disturbance, though it tends to avoid regularly disturbed ground. It occurs, frequently mixed with *Microbryum rectum*, on shallow soil around limestone rock outcrops and in thin turf on steep chalk slopes, on open ground in chalk pits and limestone quarries, by paths and tracks, and on disturbed soil in calcareous grassland (including areas from which turf has been cut). Although it sometimes grows in stubble fields it is much less frequent in this habitat than *M. floerkeanum* and *M. rectum*. It was formerly a characteristic species of earth-capped limestone walls, growing in abundance with *Tortula lanceola* in the later stages of the bryophyte succession on wall tops (Jones, 1953). At its northern limit in Scotland, it occurs on calcareous sea cliffs and inland on friable, seasonally dry

slopes of Dalradian Limestone at higher altitudes than in its other British and Irish sites, and in communities that include plants with more northern and montane affinities. Altitudinal range: 5–500 m.

Its demise on mud-capped walls is of long-standing, but there is a continuing decline in many regions from the loss of open calcareous ground, especially from infilling and vegetational succession in pits and quarries.

Autoicous; capsules are abundant, maturing from October to April.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Widespread in S and C Europe, north to S Scandinavia, east to Kaliningrad and Ukraine. N Africa (Algeria, Tunisia). Turkey, Israel, Turkmenistan.



D.F. Chamberlain & C.D. Preston, rev. T.L. Blockeel