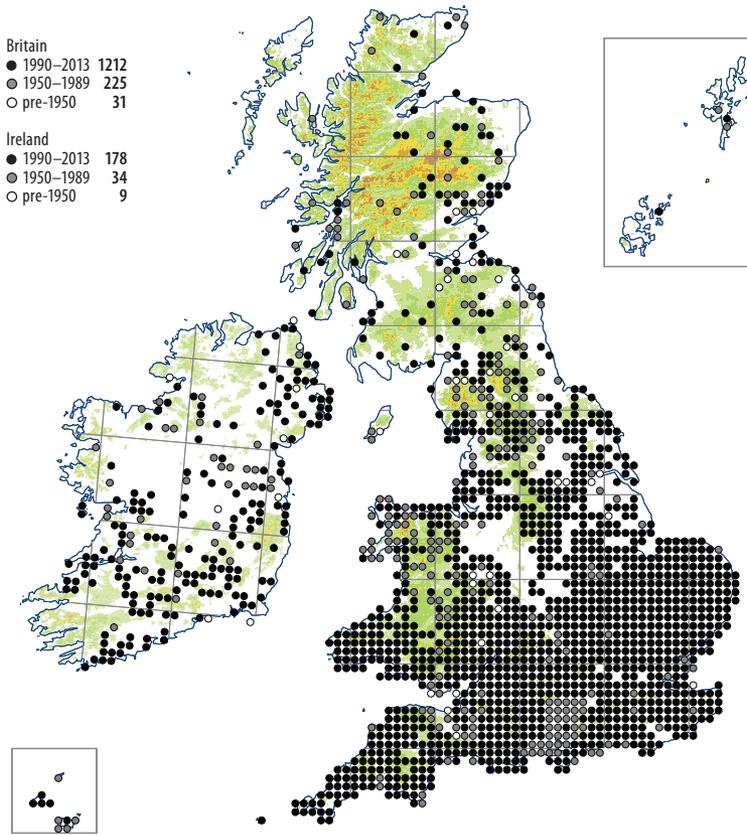


# Syntrichia montana



Often abundant as tufts or cushions on limestone rocks and crags, limestone pavement, and walls of natural stone, and sometimes the only species present in crevices of bare vertical cliffs. It is commonly associated with other calcicoles such as *Porella platyphylla*, *Fissidens dubius*, *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Trichostomum crispulum* and *Tortella tortuosa*. More rarely it grows on non-calcareous rocks, but always where there is some base content. It is frequent on artificial substrates such as brick and mortared walls, gravestones, roof tiles, asbestos, and concrete, where associates include *Didymodon rigidulus*, *Grimmia pulvinata*, *Orthotrichum anomalum* and *Schistidium crassipilum*. It is generally rare as an epiphyte on well-illuminated trees, though more commonly so in some parts of eastern England, where it is often found on elder. It also occurs on tarmac, chippings and compacted gravel, but not as abundantly

as *Syntrichia ruralis*. The sites in which it grows are often exposed to full sun and the species is tolerant of prolonged drought. Altitudinal range: 0–550 m.

Like *S. ruralis*, this species is much more densely recorded in lowland regions than in the 1991–1994 Atlas. This is partly from systematic recording in previously neglected counties, but there has almost certainly been a genuine increase in hitherto polluted areas, including a spread into ruderal habitats.

Dioicous; capsules are frequent, mature in spring and summer.

It is sometimes confused with small forms of *S. ruralis* in ruderal habitats and may therefore be over-recorded on tarmac and gravel. Var. *calva*, which lacks the characteristic hyaline hair-point of the typical form, has recently been found on a limestone wall top in Gloucestershire (Martin, 2011) and is likely to occur elsewhere.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Most of Europe, north to S Scandinavia, east to Ukraine, the southern Urals and Caucasus. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey, Near East, Iran to Tajikistan. N America.

T.L. Blockeel

