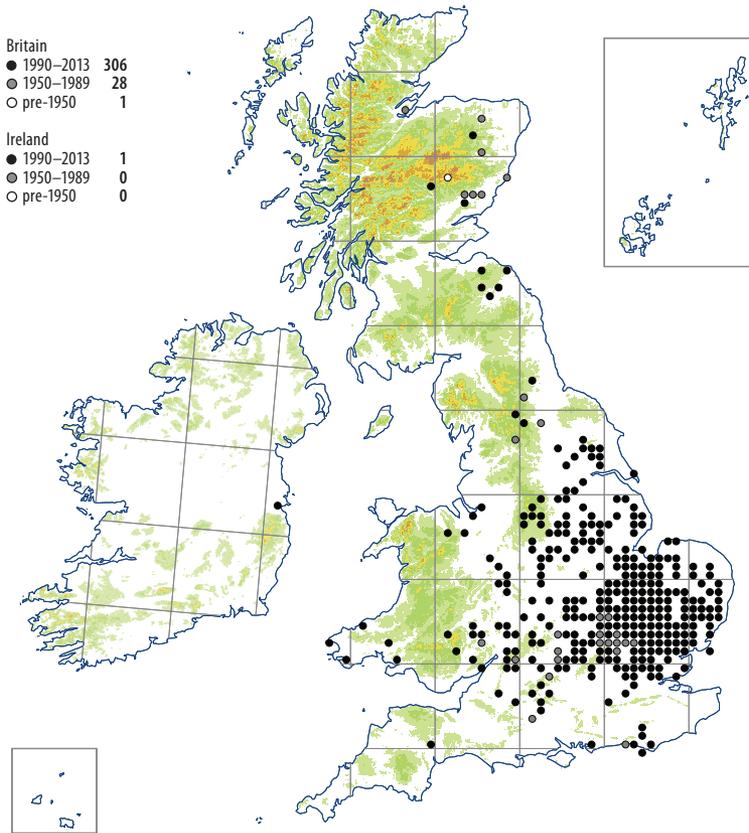


Syntrichia virescens



As an epiphyte, *Syntrichia virescens* occurs on the boles and bases of mature trees in open places, and also on smaller trees such as elder. It favours trees with base-rich bark, and is commonly found on ash; other frequent hosts include sycamore and willow. In some regions it tends to occur low down on tree trunks, including alders, on the banks of streams and rivers, but elsewhere it occurs widely on trees in orchards, parks, churchyards, villages, roadsides and similar places. It often occurs as isolated tufts or patches but in parts of eastern England it is more frequent on trees than *S. laevipila*. It is also widespread in man-made habitats, particularly on old tarmac, more rarely on compacted gravel, concrete and stones. Exceptionally it has been recorded on thatched roofs. Altitudinal range: 0–530 m.

It was not recognised in Britain until 1958; prior to that it was probably an overlooked but rare species, as it had already been collected in Scotland in 1886. It has undoubtedly increased in recent years, especially on tarmac, and many of its western localities (including its Irish site in Dublin) occur in ruderal habitats and are probably recent introductions.

Dioicous; capsules are occasional, mature in summer. Gemmae occur on the leaves, but are unusual and are perhaps produced only when plants are under stress. Gemmae are also commonly produced on the protonema (Pressel & Duckett, unpublished).

European Temperate. W, C and E Europe, north to C Scandinavia, the Baltic States and C European Russia, south to the mountains of the Mediterranean region (where it is sometimes replaced by the closely related *S. minor* (Bizot) M.T. Gallego, J. Guerra, M.J. Cano, Ros & Sanchez-Moya, which has columnar leaf papillae). Canary Islands, N Africa. Turkey, Near East, eastwards to Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

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