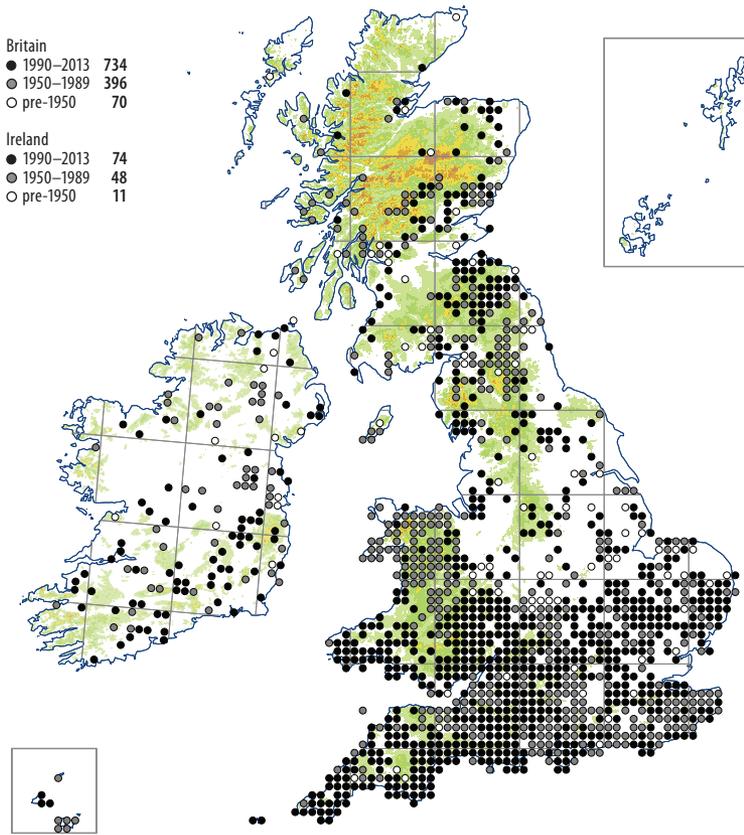


Syntrichia laevipila



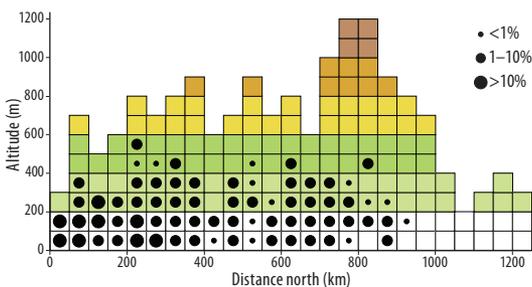
This species occurs as an epiphyte on the trunks and branches of a wide variety of trees, especially elm, ash, willows and old elders, but also alder, beech, lime, oak and many other species. It often occurs on isolated trees in well-illuminated places such as roadsides, villages and small towns, parks, hedgerows and woodland margins. Frequent associates include *Frullania dilatata*, *Metzgeria furcata*, *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Orthotrichum lyellii* and other *Orthotrichum* spp., and *Zygodon viridissimus*. It also grows occasionally on the bases and roots of trees by streams and rivers, and rarely on rocks and walls where there is some base content. Altitudinal range: 0–350 m.

Many populations on elm were lost through Dutch Elm Disease, but it had already declined or had been eliminated

in areas where levels of air pollution were high. Although it is now recovering, it has been slow to spread back to these areas and often occurs sporadically and in small quantity.

The typical form is synoicous and frequently produces capsules, mature in spring and summer. Axillary leaf-like gemmae occur occasionally among the upper leaves, and gemma-bearing plants are usually dioicous.

A very variable species. Plants with leaf-like gemmae were formerly distinguished as var. *laevipilaeformis*, but this has not been recognised as distinct by most recent authors. *Syntrichia pagorum* (Milde) J.J. Amann is a related propaguliferous species of uncertain status that is common in southern Europe but is apparently not present in Britain or Ireland.



Submediterranean-Subatlantic. Widespread in S and C Europe, common in the Mediterranean region and extending north to S Sweden and Poland. Macaronesia, N Africa. SW Asia, including Saudi Arabia. In a broad sense *S. laevipila* (including *S. pagorum*) is widespread across temperate Asia and N America, Mexico. S America. C and S Africa. Australia and New Zealand.

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