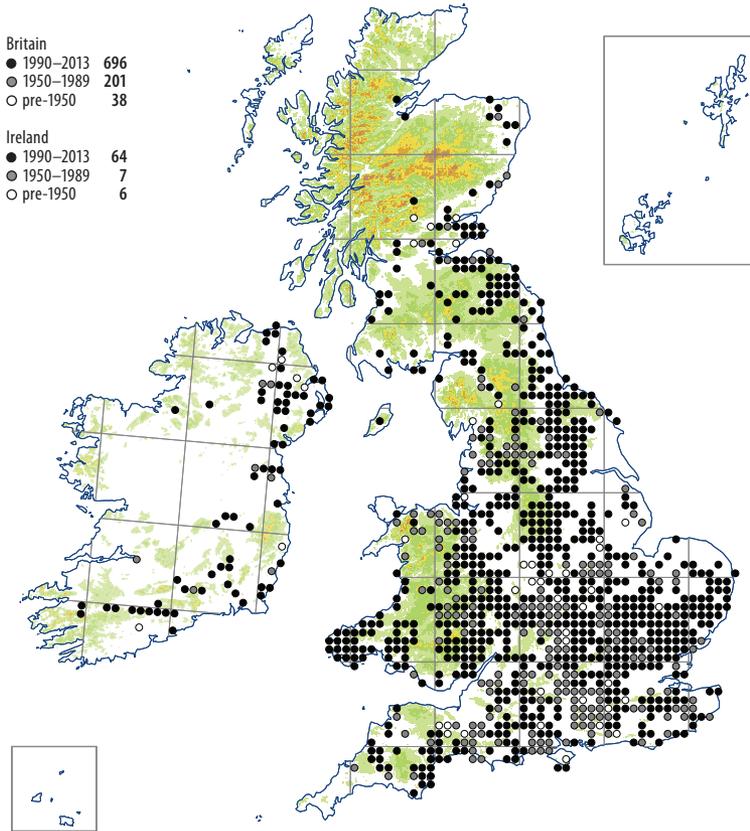


Syntrichia latifolia



The natural habitat of this species is on the roots and bases of trees by streams and rivers which are subject to periodic flooding, especially in their middle and lower reaches. It is characteristic of silty bark in the flood zone but occurs also on rock, stone and concrete, on retaining walls, bridges, slipways and embankments. Being normally embedded in silt it is unaffected by bark acidity and is found on all the common riverside trees, such as alder, willows and sycamore. It is very commonly associated with *Leskea polycarpa* and in some districts with *Orthotrichum sprucei*. Occasionally it occurs as an epiphyte away from water, and then usually on trees with base-rich bark. It can be abundant on trees near limestone quarries. Increasingly in recent decades it has become a weedy species on moist stonework and concrete, and particularly on old damp tarmac in churchyards, on pavements and shaded lanes, sometimes

accompanied by *Didymodon nicholsonii* and *Scleropodium cespitosum*. It is now present in many areas that lack suitable riverine habitats, such as offshore islands. Altitudinal range: 0–480 m.

Syntrichia latifolia has certainly increased in weedy habitats, presumably benefitting from the increased availability of old tarmac and volumes of traffic, which doubtless conveys the propagules along roads and driveways. Records have also increased from riverine habitats, as in Ireland.

Dioicous; capsules are rare, mature in spring. Gemmae are almost always present on the surface of the leaves, and also on the protonema (Pressel & Duckett, unpublished).

European Temperate. W and C Europe, north to S Scandinavia, east to Latvia and Ukraine, rare in S Europe and absent from many of the Mediterranean islands. Turkey; reported from Russian Asia (Yakutia). Western N America.

T.L. Blockeel

