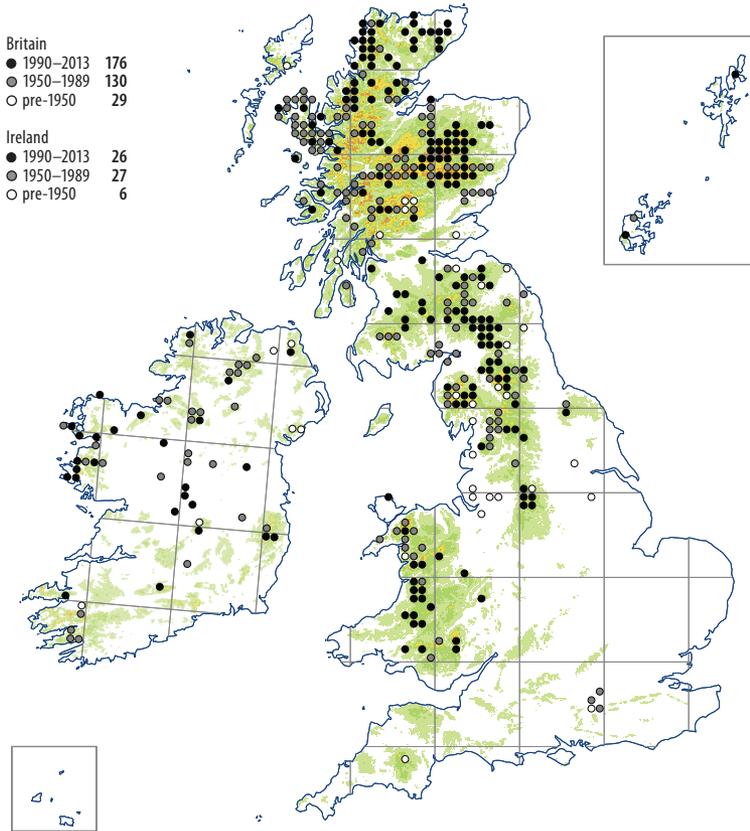


Tetraplodon mnioides



This is the commonest moss in Britain and Ireland that colonises decaying animal remains. It is typically found on bones, especially of sheep and deer, but occasionally small mammals and birds such as grouse. It also colonises bird pellets, old dung (especially of carnivores), and has even been found growing in a discarded sardine tin. It has few associates, other than *Tetraplodon angustatus* and *Splachnum* species. It is largely restricted to upland areas on moorland, montane slopes, and raised and blanket bog, only rarely on lowland heath. O'Reilly (2010) noted its regular occurrence on forestry tracks in northern England, and it is remarkably frequent in the mid Wales orefield on dung on lead mines. Though often on wet ground, it does not require constant moisture and sometimes grows on bones or dung on dry slopes and in block scree. In a study of *T. angustatus*, *T. mnioides*, *Splachnum ampullaceum* and *S. luteum* Hedw.

colonising dung in Alberta, Marino (1991) found that the *Tetraplodon* species had no preference there for carnivore (wolf) dung over herbivore (moose) dung, but that in dry habitats in the field they produced more gametophytes than *Splachnum* species and often eliminated them; the reverse was true in wet habitats. Altitudinal range: 0–1010 m.

It was always rare in southern and eastern England, and has now been almost or completely eliminated there from the loss of heathland and reduced levels of grazing.

Autoicous; capsules are common, mature in spring and summer.

Circumpolar Boreo-arctic montane. In Europe from Svalbard south to Spain, Italy and Montenegro. Through Asia to the Russian Far East, China, Korea and Japan, south to Borneo and New Guinea. Greenland, N and C America, the Andes, southern S America and Falkland Islands. Tropical Africa.

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