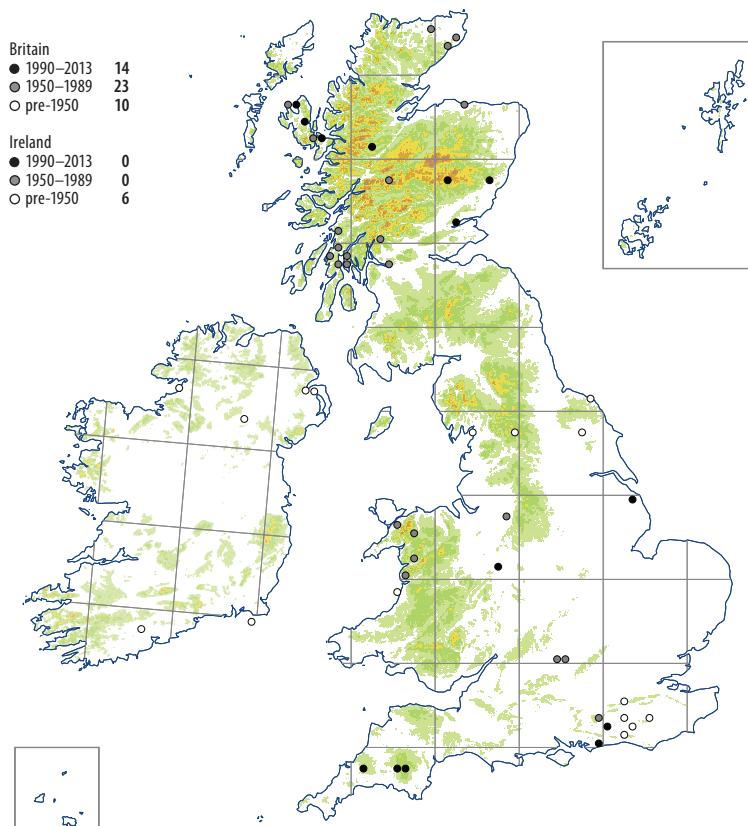


Ditrichum pusillum



A rare calcifuge moss of open or thinly vegetated ground. Recorded habitats include gravel and clay pits, old quarries, and sandy or gritty banks by lanes and roads, where associates include tuber-bearing *Bryum* spp., *Trichodon cylindricus*, and (on china-clay in Cornwall) *Lophocolea bispinosa*, *Ditrichum heteromallum* and *Pohlia annotina*. In the uplands it has been found on thin gravelly soil overlying limestone rocks and in *Deschampsia* grassland below a cliff. It is a very infrequent member of arable-field communities on non-calcareous soils, where it has been recorded with *Riccia sorocarpa*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Bryum rubens*, *B. subapiculatum*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Dicranella staphylina*, *Pohlia annotina*, *Pseudephemerum nitidum*, *Tortula truncata* and *Trichodon cylindricus*. Altitudinal range: 25–900 m.

It has apparently always been rare in Britain and Ireland, and many occurrences may have been transitory. It is easily overlooked without capsules, and it is difficult to assess the extent of any decline. Many of the records from arable fields were made through the expertise of the late H.L.K. Whitehouse; it is clearly a rare species in this habitat, and is unknown from some counties where cultivated fields have been well recorded. It was logged in only two fields during the BBS Survey of the bryophytes of arable land, and Whitehouse (1976) found it in only 10% of arable fields on non-calcareous soils sampled by him.

Dioicus; capsules are frequent in undisturbed habitats, mature in winter, but have not been found in arable fields, where only female and vegetative plants are known. Rhizoidal tubers are frequent in non-fruiting plants, and protonemal gemmae are produced in culture (Arts, 1994).

Circumpolar Boreo-temperate. Widespread in Europe, north to Iceland and N Fennoscandia, east to the Urals and Caucasus, but absent from most of the Mediterranean region. Canary Islands, N Africa (Algeria). Turkey, Afghanistan, Siberia, Himalaya and E Asia. In N America mainly in the east, south to Texas and Florida, in the west in British Columbia.

H.L.K. Whitehouse, rev. T.L. Bockeel

