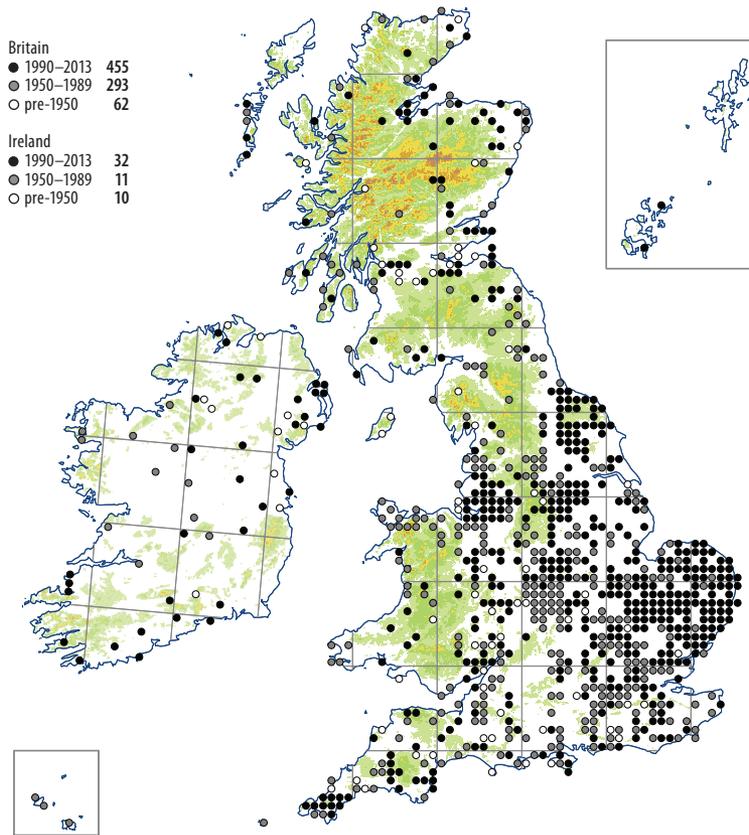


Leptobryum pyriforme



A moss with weedy tendencies, but occupying a wide range of habitats that appear to have little in common other than being sparsely vegetated, and exposed or lightly shaded. Substrates range from acid to highly alkaline: it is one of the few mosses that can grow with *Tortula cernua* on strongly alkaline lime waste. As a weed it occurs on soil in flowerpots in glasshouses and gardens, on burnt sites, and on stone or brick walls; it was formerly frequent on cinders, and persisted in inner cities when levels of air pollution peaked, as on old walls with *Bryum argenteum*, *Ceratodon purpureus* and *Funaria hygrometrica*. Gilbert (1970) reported that it could tolerate a mean aerial SO_2 content exceeding 85 ppm. More natural habitats include bare or disturbed ground by streams, ponds and reservoirs, and poached ground in marshy fields. It grows in saltmarsh, on dead wood in sheltered sites, and on banks and ledges of rocks

and cliffs, especially sandstone, less often limestone and rarely on tufa. It is an occasional component of the arable field flora, especially in the *Bryum dichotomum*-*Marchantia polymorpha* assemblage described by Preston *et al.* (2010) from fields with light soils in eastern regions. A report by Clifford (1936) of a Flandrian subfossil associated with wet conditions, cinders and mesolithic flints in the Isle of Wight suggests that it has been in Britain for at least 3500 years. Altitudinal range: 0–390 m.

Recording in arable fields has probably contributed to a marked increase in records from eastern England.

Usually synoicous, although some plants have male and others female inflorescences; capsules are frequent, mature in spring and summer. Rhizoidal gemmae are abundant and in wet habitats are sometimes present in the lower leaf axils; protonemal gemmae are also produced (Pressel & Duckett, unpublished).

Circumpolar Wide-temperate. Widespread in Europe, north to Iceland, the Faeroes and Svalbard. Macaronesia, N Africa. SW Asia. A very widely distributed species, especially in the Holarctic, but also in the temperate regions of the Southern Hemisphere, and reaching Antarctica. Scattered occurrences in the tropics, mainly on mountains.

R.A. Finch, rev. T.L. Blockeel

