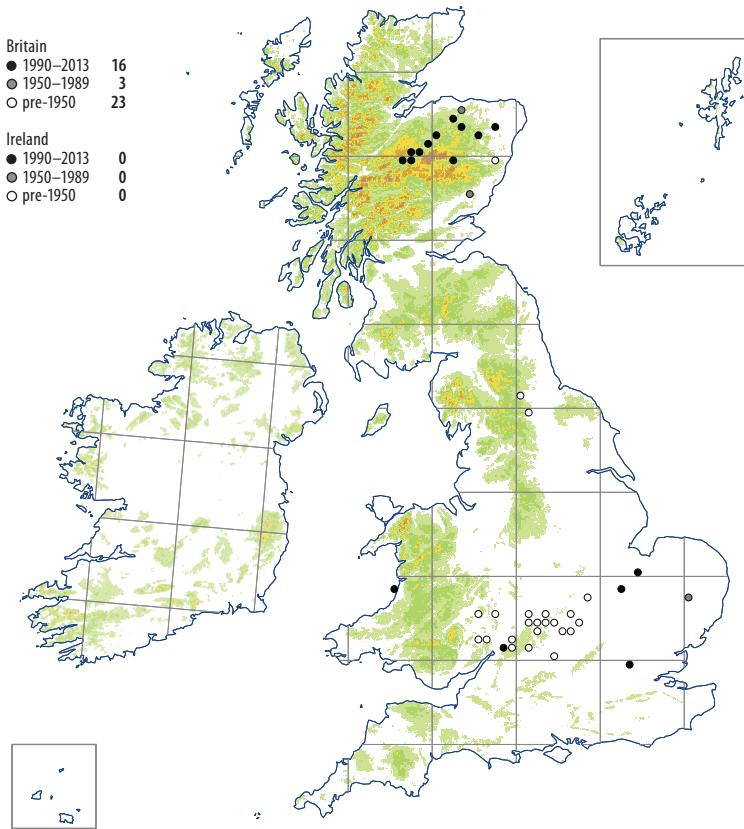


Orthotrichum obtusifolium



An epiphyte, growing as a pioneer on exposed roots and trunks, often of large mature trees. It has been found on roadsides and parkland, less often in open woodland and carr, probably always in well-illuminated localities. Its sole recorded Welsh site is in Aberystwyth town centre. Aspen is a characteristic host tree in NE Scotland. Elsewhere it has been found on ash, elm, elder, Norway maple, oak, poplar, sycamore and willow, and in eastern England on apple trees in orchards. At one Scottish locality it was recorded on rotting logs as well as on a nearby elm tree. Associated species include *Frullania dilatata*, *Amblystegium serpens*, *Leucodon sciuroides*, *Orthotrichum affine*, *O. diaphanum*, *O. speciosum*, *O. stramineum* and *Zygodon viridissimus*. Altitudinal range: 0–290 m.

Orthotrichum obtusifolium is characteristic of continental climates. It was widespread, though apparently rare, in Britain in the nineteenth century but declined greatly during the industrial era. It has been found at several new sites in England and Wales in recent years, and very probably these represent re-colonisation from wind-borne propagules. However the recent records from NE Scotland are probably the result of greater awareness rather than a genuine increase in occurrence there.

Diocious; capsules are unknown in Britain. Gemmae are abundant on the leaves and are produced on the protonema in culture (Goode *et al.*, 1993).

Circumpolar Boreal-montane. N, C and E Europe, north to N Norway and Svalbard (not in Iceland), rare in S Europe, to C Spain and N Greece. N Africa (Morocco). Turkey, Iran. Widespread in boreal and temperate zones of Asia and N America.

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