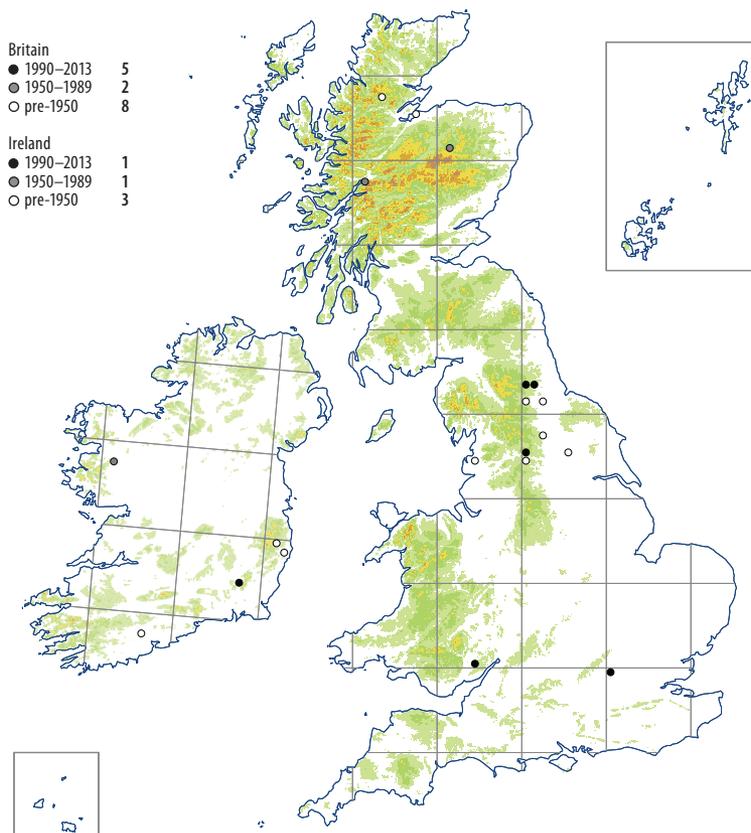


Orthotrichum pallens



This rare epiphyte grows on the bark of alder, ash, elder, hazel, field maple, sallow, sycamore, willow and wych elm, often in rather open sites such as riversides, hedges and woodland margins. In Ireland it has been found on sycamore trees by a track in mixed woodland, and at the edge of a village in unremarkable flat country with little shelter. In a Scottish locality it was found on the trunk of a solitary tree, a wych elm by a river, but here with more shelter. A recent record from southern England was from a willow branch in wet willow/alder scrub by a river, and the only Welsh record was on a hedgerow field maple. Altitudinal range: 55–140 m.



Always rare in Britain and Ireland, *Orthotrichum pallens* is perhaps more adapted to continental climates than some other species of the genus. Most of its occurrences are transitory, but the population in Weardale, Co. Durham, where there are at least eight localities, is of long-standing and appears to be stable.

Autoicous; capsules are common, mature in early summer. Gemmae are sometimes present on the leaves of American plants (Vitt, 1973) but have not been reported from Britain or Ireland.

Orthotrichum pallens is a somewhat characterless species, which is difficult to spot in the field and may therefore be under-recorded. Its separation from *O. pumilum* can be difficult. At most of its British and Irish sites it is known only from a single collection.

European Boreo-temperate. N, C and E Europe, north to N Norway, Svalbard and NW Russia, rare southwards to the mountains of the Mediterranean region, absent from most of the Mediterranean islands. Madeira, N Africa (Morocco). Turkey, Caucasus, Iran, and across C and E Asia. N America, south to Mexico.

C.D. Preston, rev. T.L. Blockeel

◀ River Wharfe, Addingham, Mid-west Yorkshire, 2005. Nick Hodgetts