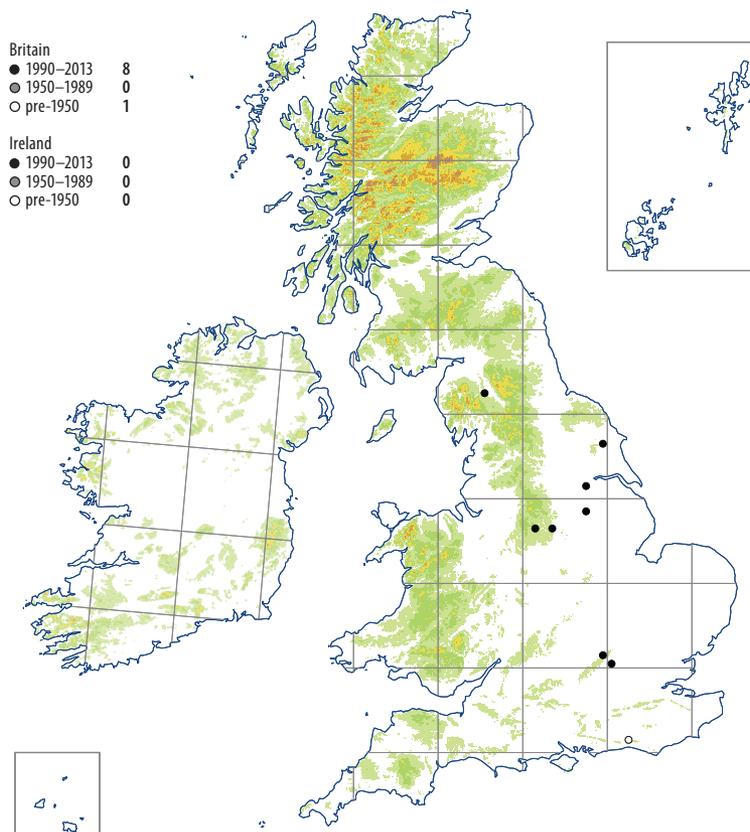


Orthotrichum consimile



Known only as an epiphyte, this species occurs as isolated tufts on the bark of trees in well-illuminated sites. The known host species are elder, ash and willow. Some records are from open woodland; the others are a laneside bank by a field, a disused railway track, and the edge of parkland. Associates include *Orthotrichum affine*, *O. pulchellum*, and many other common epiphytes. Altitudinal range: 0–335 m.

Although it had been collected in Sussex in 1846, *O. consimile* was not found again in Britain until 2007 (Blockeel, 2008). There is little doubt that it is a recent colonist at most or all of its modern sites, as most of them are in areas that were subject to high levels of SO₂ pollution in the 20th century. The discovery of eight populations in as many years and the presence of isolated, often single tufts at its known localities suggests a species in the early

stages of colonisation. The spores are likely to originate from continental Europe.

Autoicous: capsules are commonly present, mature in summer, later than in the related *O. pulchellum*.

Compared with most species of the genus, it is distinctive in the field because of its long seta, but lack of awareness may have caused it to be overlooked in the past. It is clearly a rare species at present.

Oceanic Temperate. The history of its occurrence in Europe is similar to that in Britain. It was known from Germany in the 19th century but was then unknown until it was rediscovered in Spain in 1980 and in Germany in 1994. It has been found subsequently in Portugal, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Medina *et al.* (2012) have shown that *O. consimile* s.l. consists of four species, all of which occur in N America. Only one of them is present in Europe and its correct name is *O. columbicum*. It is widespread in Pacific N America.

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