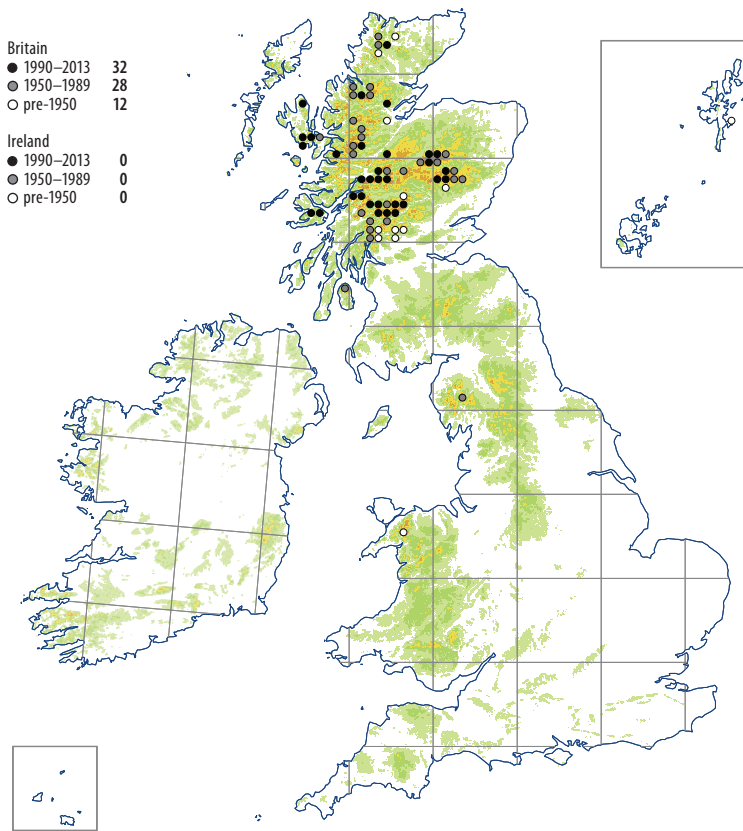


Conostomum tetragonum



Most sites for this moss are on skeletal, gravelly soils in areas where snow lies late into the summer. This habitat is protected by the snow layer during the winter but is subject to frost-heave once the snow melts and can be very dry during the latter part of the summer, once the snow has gone. In the snowbeds it forms small, tight cushions which are part of a diverse bryophyte community, and common associates include *Carex bigelowii*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Gnaphalium supinum*, *Juncus trifidus*, *Salix herbacea*, *Anthelia juratzkana*, *Gymnomitrium concinnatum*, *Lophozia sudetica*, *Marsupella brevissima*, *Ditrichum zonatum*, *Kiaeria falcata*, *Polytrichastrum sexangulare*, *Racomitrium heterostichum* and *R. lanuginosum*. It can occur at lower altitudes on sites kept open by periodic disturbance or abrasion by the wind, particularly where the rock has a higher base content. Altitudinal range: 670–1340 m.

It was last seen in Wales in 1919 and in the Lake District in 1954. The records suggest that there has also been a decline on the southern edge of its range in Scotland, and statistical analysis indicates a downward trend. However these southern localities have had few recent visits by bryologists and it would be premature to conclude that the decline there is real.

Dioicous; capsules are occasional, mature in summer.

Circumpolar Arctic-montane. Widespread in the Arctic, including Iceland and Svalbard, and extending south to N Spain, the Pyrenees, Alps and Romania. Himalaya, Siberia, N and E Asia, Japan. Northern N America and Greenland.

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