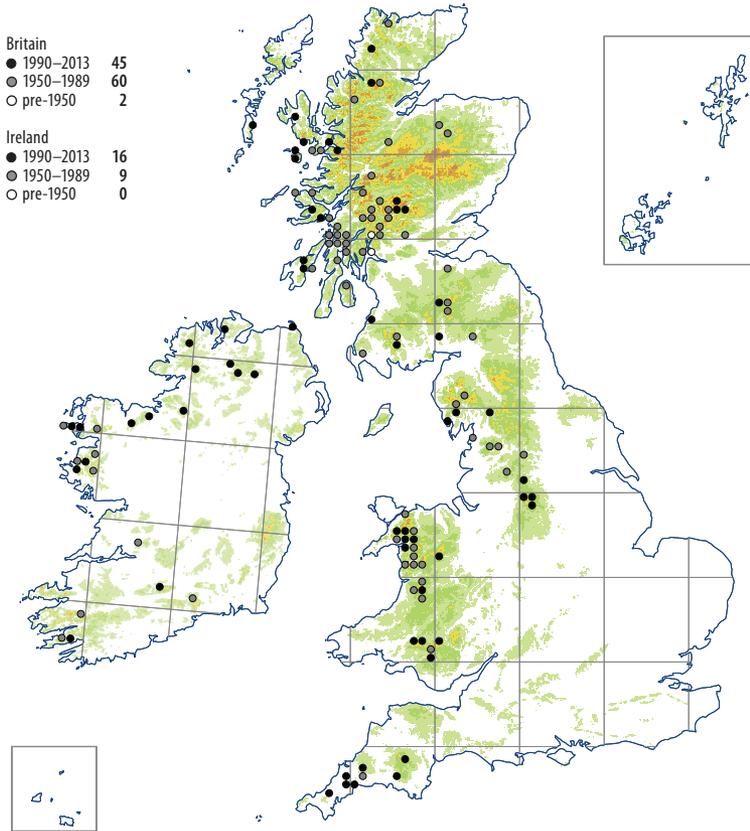


Pohlia flexuosa



This species grows on moist sandy or gritty soils in rocky places by streams and waterfalls in upland and montane regions, sometimes in very sheltered locations with hygrophilous liverworts, but it is also found on mineral and humic soils in open sites on the banks of stream gullies, on gravelly streambanks, and in crevices and on ledges of sandstone, schist, shale and other crumbling rocks, extending to upland crags. It sometimes occurs on steep sandy river banks with *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Scapania scandica*, *Dichodontium pellucidum* and *Pohlia annotina*. Elsewhere it is found in a variety of open or disturbed habitats, including roadsides and banks, old quarries and sand/gravel pits, ditch sides, a reservoir margin, and soil pockets in unimproved pasture. It is tolerant of zinc and other heavy metals. In Cornwall it occurs on metal-rich sludge and below galvanised metal in china-clay pits, and it

has been found in thin silt over metal-rich rock in a mine adit in N Wales. Altitudinal range: 5–765 m.

Dioicous; immature capsules are reported by Lewis & Smith (1978) without locality, but are otherwise apparently unknown. Vegetative propagation is by caducous axillary bulbils.

Arts *et al.* (1987) separated British, Irish and Alpine collections and those from the Netherlands and Belgium as a separate variety, at that time called *Pohlia myyldermansii* var. *pseudomyyldermansii*. Townsend (1995) found intermediates in collections from Asia and the variety is no longer recognised. Townsend raised the possibility that it is an introduced species in Europe. While this is a possible explanation of the occurrence of metal-tolerant populations, the species occurs widely in natural and semi-natural habitats, not just in Britain and Ireland but in the Alps and Carpathians, and it has the appearance of a native species. Records have been slow to accumulate since the revision of Lewis & Smith (1978) and it is probably still an under-recorded species.

Suboceanic Boreal-montane. Europe, from northern Spain and Italy north to western Norway and east to Austria and Romania. India, Sri Lanka and the Himalaya, probably elsewhere in Asia but the precise distribution is unclear because of taxonomic difficulties.

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