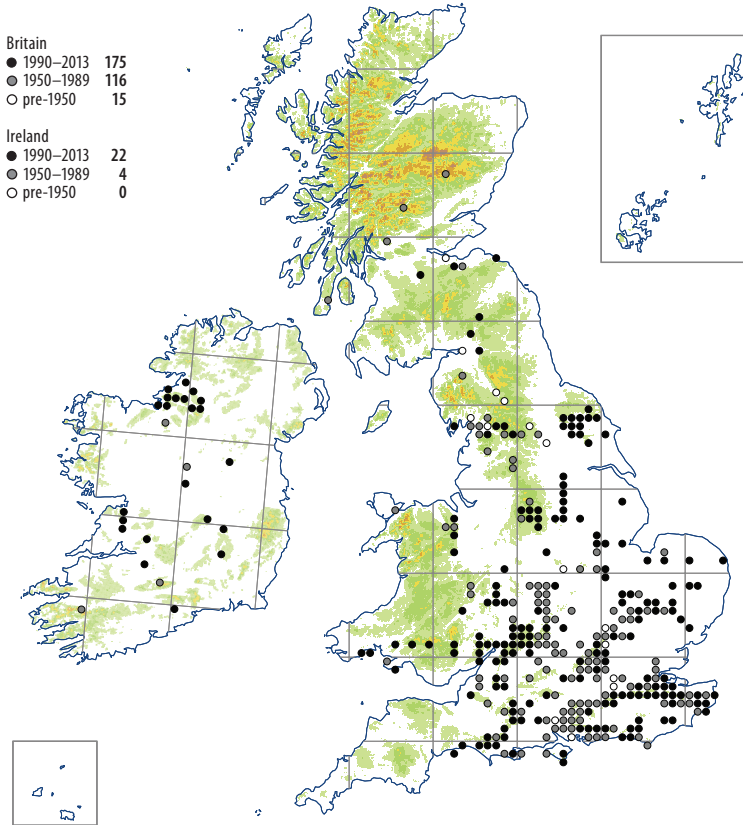


Fissidens gracilifolius



A minute plant, gregarious or forming small patches on shaded dry chalk, limestone or calcareous sandstone in woodland, road cuttings and old pits and quarries. It is particularly characteristic of chalk stones and rubble amongst leaf litter in S England, where it is often associated with *Seligeria calycina*. It is found on walls, typically on oolite and other limestones, more rarely on brickwork. Another characteristic habitat is on the bases of limestone monuments and gravestones, and it is therefore found in churchyards in districts that lack natural rock outcrops. Altitudinal range: 10–520 m.

Dioicous or autoicous; capsules are common to abundant, late summer to early spring.

There has been a large increase in records since the 1991–1994 Atlas, but this is surely because of more rigorous recording of members of the *Fissidens viridulus* complex, especially those treated as distinct species.

Like other members of the *F. viridulus* complex, *F. gracilifolius* is a poorly delimited taxon, formerly regarded as a variety of *F. pusillus* but now regularly treated as separate species. It is distinguished from *F. pusillus* only by the relative length of its perichaetial leaves, and intermediate forms occur whose identification is arbitrary. There are likely to be inconsistencies in recording, especially in western and northern areas.

European Southern-temperate. Widespread but rare in Europe, extending from the Mediterranean region to Iceland and C Scandinavia and European Russia. Macaronesia (Madeira). Turkey and Caucasus. Reports from elsewhere may belong to other species.

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