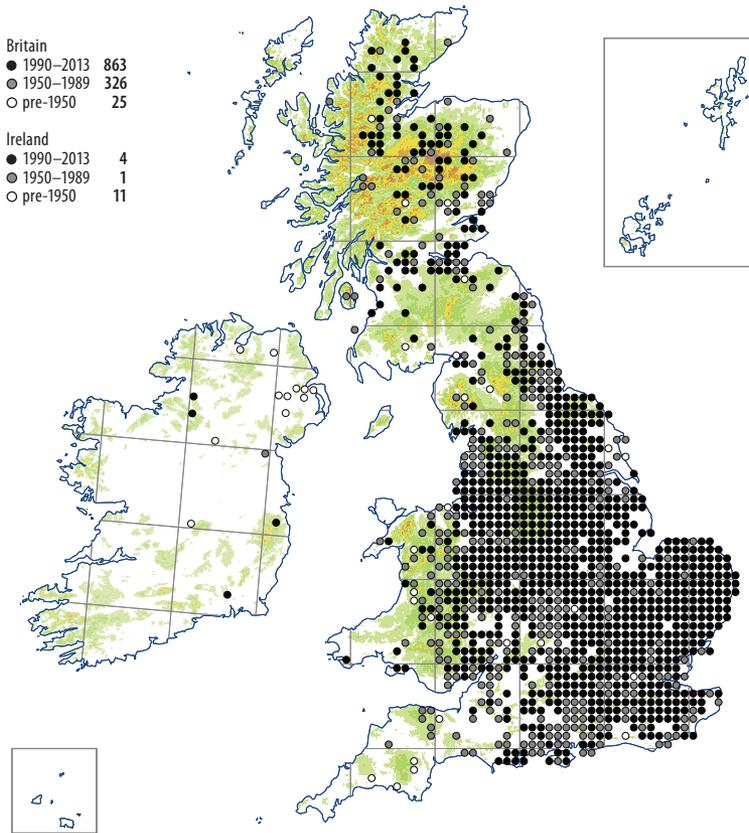


Aulacomnium androgynum



A strict calcifuge, this species is most often found on decaying organic matter, being most frequent on rotting tree stumps but also colonising decaying logs, twigs and even leaves, old grass tussocks, fence-posts, pollard willows, the freshly exposed sides of peat-diggings, and banks in hedgerows and woods where the soil has a high humus content. Other habitats include the bases of trees with acid bark such as alder, birch and oak, and the inclined trunks and branches of elders, willows and occasionally other trees. As an epiphyte it is sometimes associated with *Dicranum tauricum*. It is occasionally frequent on mineral soils, especially on sandy banks, friable sandstone and acid shale, but also on thin humus on rock outcrops, road cuttings and walls. In both Pembrokeshire and SE Ireland it has been recorded on acid soil on estuarine banks. It is rare in calcareous districts and mostly confined to wood, but

has been recorded on deep leached soil on limestone rock ledges. Altitudinal range: 0–510 m.

It increased in frequency during the 20th century and spread to new habitats. In Oxfordshire it had only once been recorded on elders and had never been seen on willow before 1952, but subsequently became frequent on both species (Jones, 1991). The probable cause was increased acidification due to atmospheric pollutants. With the recent decline in SO₂ emissions, the species has once again become infrequent as an epiphyte, though it is still widespread in its other habitats. It has also retreated eastwards to its former core range.

Diocious; capsules are very rare, mature in summer. Gemmae are borne abundantly in spherical clusters on leafless stem apices; morphologically different gemmae are produced on the protonema in culture (Duckett & Ligrone, 1992).

European Temperate. Widespread in W and C Europe, north to C Fennoscandia, the Baltic States and adjacent Russia; rare in S and E Europe. Canary Islands, N Africa. Turkey, Cyprus, Georgia. Reported from E Asia and Japan, but doubtfully in the Russian Far East according to Ignatov *et al.* (2006). N America, south to California and Colorado.

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