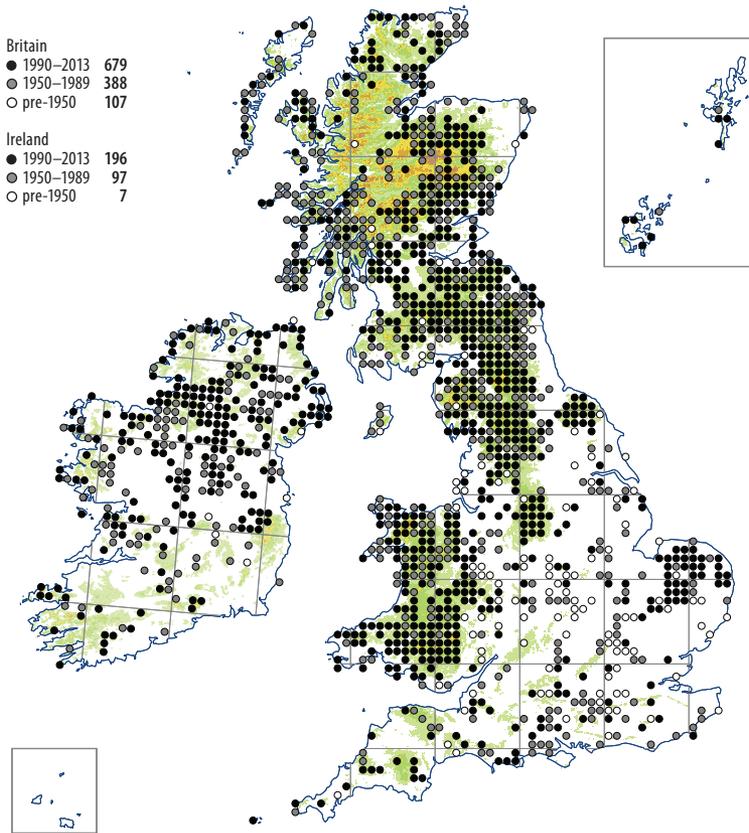


Climacium dendroides



In damp, or, more rarely, dry habitats, usually in areas which are at least mildly basic, occasionally on moderately acid ground. It is found in damp grassland, often in sites where the water level fluctuates, such as the fringes of lakes, reservoirs, dune slacks and Breckland meres, but is also found in wet meadows, mesotrophic fens, upland flushes, damp willow scrub, fen carr and swampy alder woods (where it sometimes ascends the lower parts of tree trunks). Although normally in wet habitats, *Climacium* can grow in drier conditions in limestone grassland, on the fringes of limestone rock outcrops, on mossy calcareous boulders in woods, at the foot of limestone walls, on stabilised sand dunes and in short grazed turf, both on non-calcareous sandy ground and on calcareous Breckland soils. Exceptionally it has been recorded as a colonist of open

ground on former industrial sites, for example on colliery spoil. Altitudinal range: 0–915 m.

A surprisingly local plant in S England, scarce in damp habitats and rare in dry ones. It is difficult to explain why a plant which can grow in such a range of habitats is not more frequent.

Dioicous; sex organs usually develop in permanently moist habitats but most colonies are unisexual and capsules are therefore rare. In N England female clones outnumber males by 6:1, and even in mixed colonies female shoots are more frequent than males (Bedford, 1938). Capsules mature from September to March.

Circumpolar Wide-boreal. In Europe in the boreal zone and Arctic, including Iceland and Svalbard, and in mountains south to the northern fringe of the Mediterranean region (and recorded in Corsica). Turkey, N and C and E Asia, Himalaya, Japan, N America, south to New Mexico, but in the east only to Pennsylvania; Greenland. Disjunct in Australia (Victoria, Tasmania) and New Zealand.

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