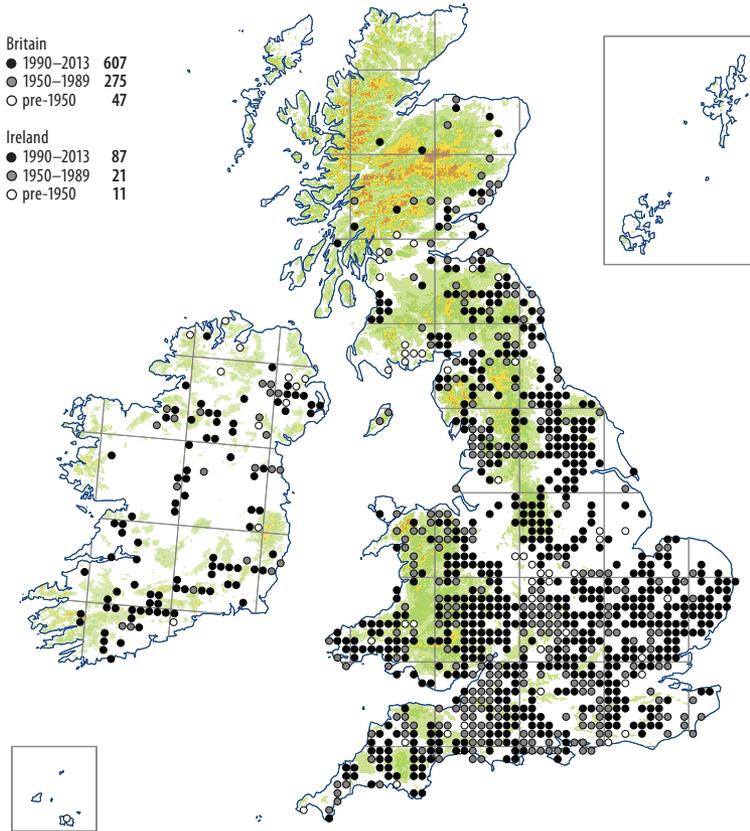


Leskea polycarpa



Primarily found on the borders of rivers, streams, ditches, lakes, reservoirs and pools in the eutrophic lowlands and the fringes of the uplands, growing in dry sites above the normal water level but in a zone liable to flooding. It favours substrates where some silt has accumulated, being most frequent on the exposed roots and lower trunks of riverside trees but also found on the woodwork, brickwork and stonework of walls and bridges and, very rarely, on earthy waterside banks. Characteristic associates are *Amblystegium serpens*, *Didymodon sinuosus*, *Bryum capillare*, *Cinclidotus fontinaloides*, *Homalia trichomanoides*, *Orthotrichum affine*, *O. diaphanum*, *Syntrichia latifolia* and in some parts of its range, *O. rivulare* and *O. sprucei*. It is very occasionally found away from water, and then usually as an epiphyte, but also rarely on stonework. Rose (1951) reported abundant plants on beech roots at a site on the chalk escarpment in Kent.

A particularly unusual record is from the iron railings of a footbridge. It is fairly tolerant of water pollution, being common by rivers such as the Trent that have large urban and industrial regions in their catchment. Altitudinal range: 0–340 m.

It was rather patchily recorded in the 1991–1994 Atlas. There has probably been a slight but real increase in parts of England as an occasional epiphyte away from water.

Autoicous; capsules are very common, mature from spring to summer.

Circumpolar Temperate. Widespread in Europe, north to Iceland, C Scandinavia and Arctic Russia, rare in the Mediterranean region. Macaronesia (reported from the Canary Islands), N Africa (Algeria). Turkey, Caucasus, Iran. Northern and temperate Asia, Japan, and widely in N America, south to the southern USA (Texas).

C.D. Preston, rev. T.L. Blockeel

