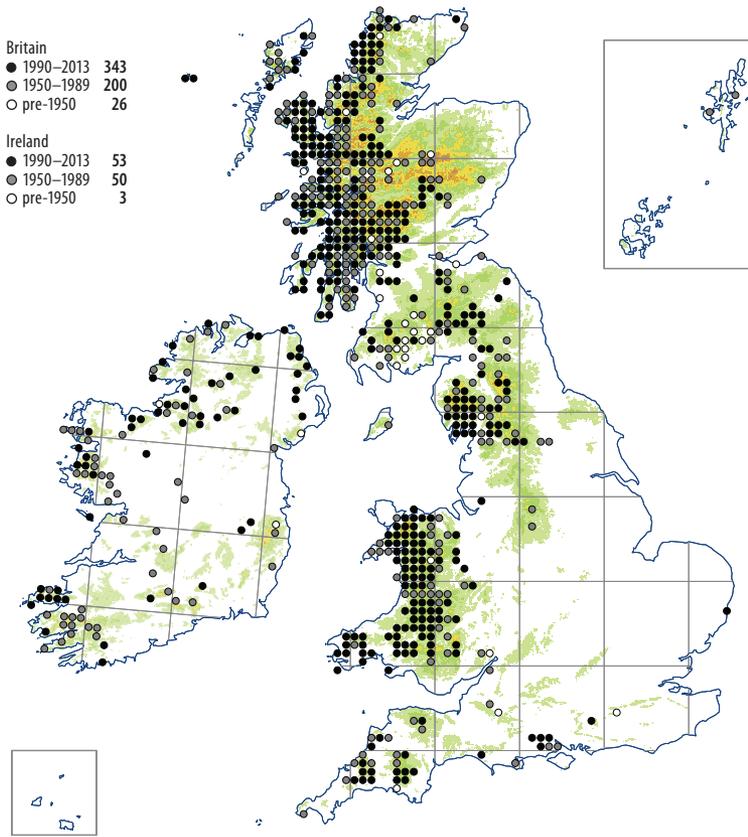


# Thuidium delicatulum



As the name suggests, a smaller and more delicate moss than *Thuidium tamariscinum*, but difficult to separate with certainty in the field. Ecologically a curious plant, normally regarded as a calcifuge in the south but often associated with mineral enrichment in the north, and, despite its distribution in Britain and Ireland, not an oceanic species globally. The most frequent habitats are damp grassland, seepage slopes and flush edges. Other habitats include damp montane cliff ledges, periodically irrigated rocks and dwarf shrub heath. It also occurs in woods, where it grows on shaded rocks, on banks or on the woodland floor, and can be locally frequent in oceanic woodlands: for example, microscope checking of *Thuidium* from the sessile oak woods of north-eastern Carmarthenshire has indicated that *T. delicatulum* is not uncommon there (1 in 5 samples) (Bosanquet *et al.*, 2005). It has been found once (in Suffolk)

on the base of a willow bole. It is found less frequently in quarries, moist woodland rides, on roadside banks, peaty soil on limestone pavement and, very rarely, on tree stumps. In flushes and seepages it may accompany such species as *Saxifraga aizoides*, *Bryum pallens*, *Campylium stellatum*, *Fissidens adianthoides*, *Philonotis fontana*, *Scorpidium* spp. and *Sphagnum contortum*. On shaded boulders and woodland banks, associates may include *Plagiochila porelloides*, *Antitrichia curtispindula*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Isoetecium alopecuroides*, *I. myosuroides* and *Kindbergia praelonga*. On wet heath in Cornwall it has been recorded with *Hylocomium splendens*, *Pleurozium schreberi* and *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*. Altitudinal range: 5–800 m.

Dioicous; capsules are occasional, mature in winter.

The distinction between *T. delicatulum* and *T. assimile* is often difficult, and apparent intermediates occur, especially in the north and west (Tallis, 1961). Some records, especially from calcareous grassland, are probably errors for *T. assimile*.

Circumpolar Temperate. Widespread in Europe including Iceland but not in Svalbard, east to the Ural mountains, becoming scarce in the Mediterranean region. Macaronesia (Azores). Turkey, Caucasus, Siberia, Russian Far East, China, Japan. N and C America and northern S America.

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