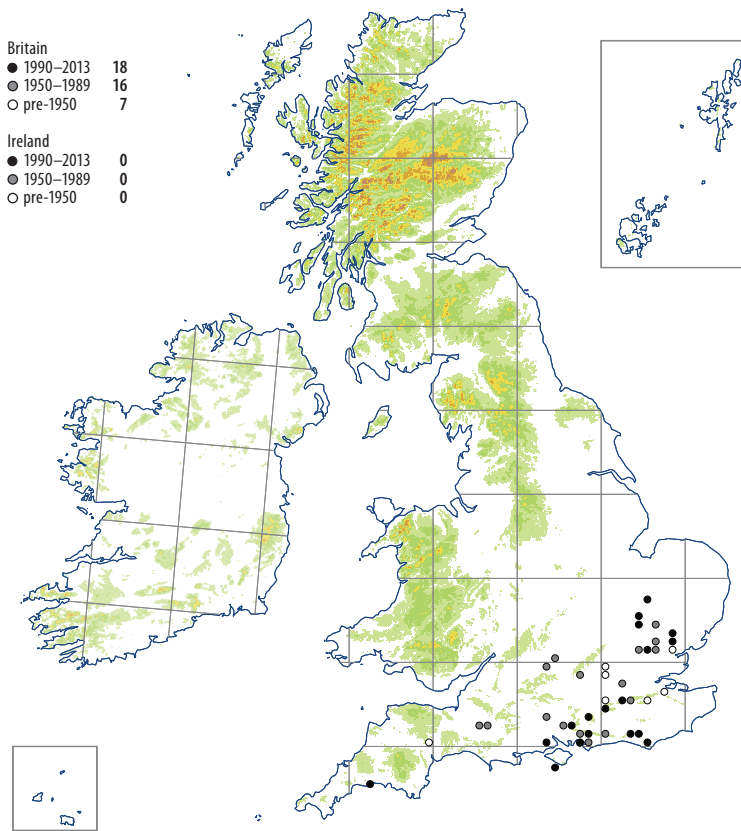


## Rhynchostegiella litorea



Unlike *Rhynchostegiella tenella*, this is primarily an epiphytic moss, occurring as thin patches on the bark of a variety of trees, in hedgerows, sheltered lanes and woodland. It favours trees with base-rich bark such as ash, elm, field maple and willow; at one site, Combe Bottom in Surrey, it was found on yew but this seems to be unusual; it is often found on the roots and bases of these trees, sometimes on stumps, but occasionally higher up the trunks. There are a few records from other hard substrates, including damp shaded stones on stream and lane banks, chalk pits and firm chalky banks, and the partly shaded horizontal surface of a tombstone. Altitudinal range: 5–175 m.

Because it was regarded in the past as a variety of *R. tenella*, *R. litorea* has probably been neglected to some extent by recorders and its ecology is poorly known. Its taxonomic status is uncertain; morphologically it is intermediate between *R. tenella* and *R. curviseta*, and it is likely that some of the records from stones and rocks belong to those species.

Mediterranean-Atlantic. Common in S Europe, north to C Germany. Macaronesia (Azores, Madeira), N Africa. Turkey, Cyprus, Iran.

T.L. Blockeel

Autoicous; capsules are frequent, mature in winter and spring.

