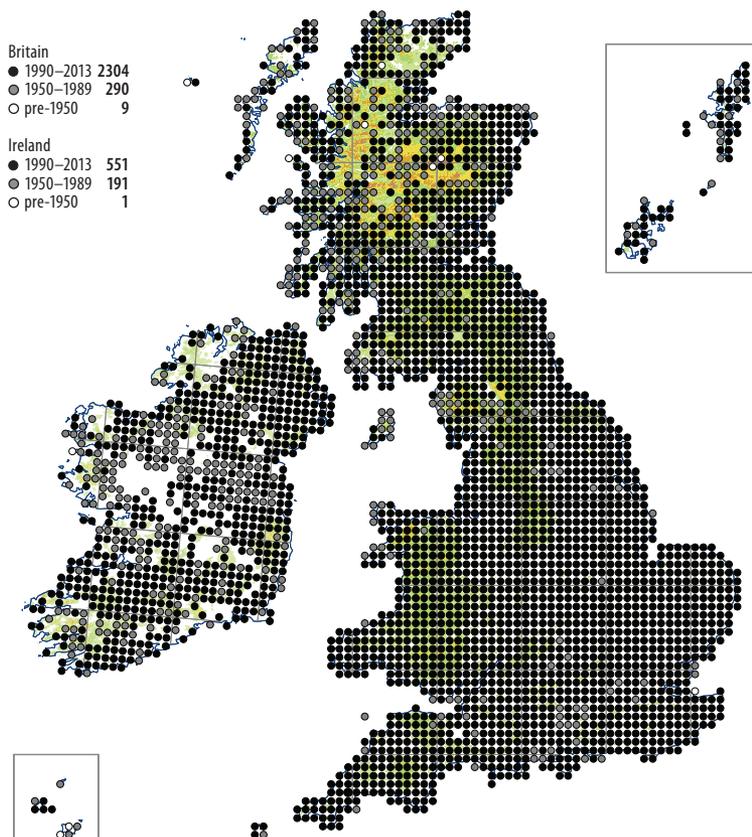


Brachythecium rutabulum

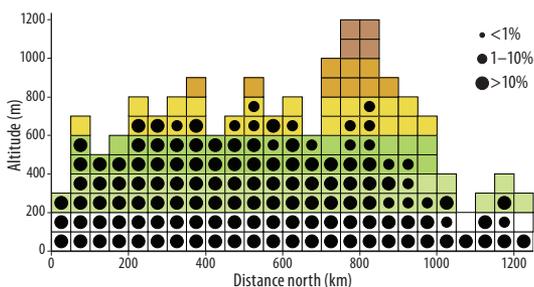


This common moss often grows luxuriantly in eutrophic situations, but is scarce or absent on more acid and oligotrophic substrates. It is common on wood, especially stumps and fallen logs, but also on tree roots and bases and on soil, and it is frequent as an epiphyte, especially in sheltered places on trees with soft bark such as elder. It is shade-tolerant and is ubiquitous in most types of woodland, including conifer plantations in the uplands. It reaches its finest development in wet woodland on base-rich soils, and is often present in tall-herb communities such as nettle (*Urtica dioica*) stands. In autumn and winter it rapidly colonises the last season's accumulation of stem litter, having a higher relative growth rate than many vascular plants (Furness & Grime, 1982). Elsewhere it colonises stones and rocks, and occurs on roadsides and walls, in hedges, by streams and rivers, in grassland, flushes and marshes,

on heaths, in quarries and on cliffs. It is quick to colonise tracks and roadsides and many types of disturbed ground, including gardens and stubble fields; on arable land it is one of the definitive members of the *Brachythecium rutabulum*-*Fissidens taxifolius* assemblage that is characteristic of set-aside fields and grass leys (Preston *et al.*, 2010). It becomes much rarer on moorlands and mountains, and then often in man-made habitats. Altitudinal range: 0–600 m.

Autoicous; capsules are common, maturing from late autumn to spring.

Morphologically it is very variable, especially when growing by streams and in grassland, and it is sometimes confused with other species of the genus. However its overall abundance means that recording errors are unlikely to affect the accuracy of the map.



European Temperate. Most of Europe north to Iceland and N Fennoscandia, but rare in the boreal zone and in arid parts of the Mediterranean lowlands. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey and the Near East. Widespread in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere, rare and largely absent in the boreal and Arctic zones, south to Himalaya, Japan and C America. Hawaii. Reported from C Africa. Southern S America, Australia, New Zealand.

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