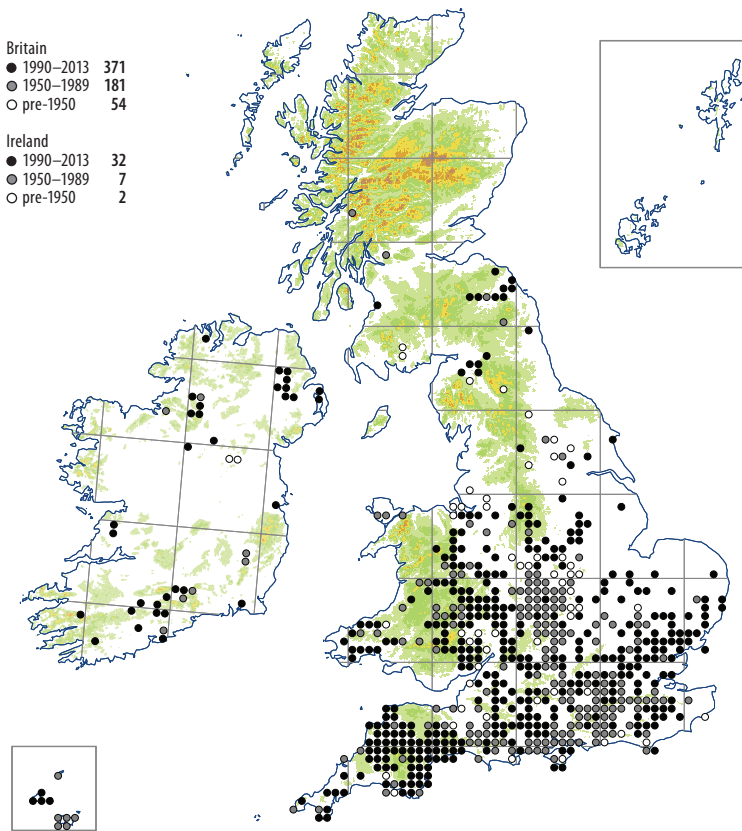


Scleropodium cespitans



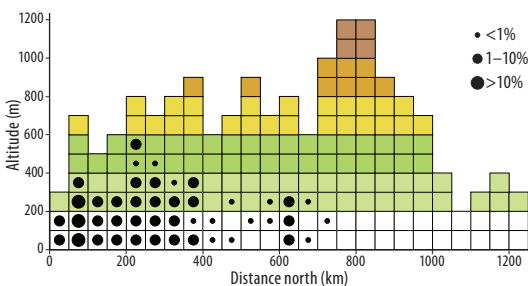
A species with two rather contrasting habitats. In most districts it is a riparian species occurring, often in abundance, on tree bases, soil, stones and masonry which are occasionally inundated by calcareous or silt-laden stream water. It is intolerant of continuous immersion and possibly benefits from periods of desiccation. Common associates are *Leskea polycarpa* and *Syntrichia latifolia*, along with many other riparian species. Like several other riverside mosses it commonly occurs away from water-courses, particularly on flat or gently sloping concrete and tarmac surfaces with slight soil accumulation, often on pavements and in churchyards. Though it is often close to rivers in such places, it also occurs remote from them. In a few areas, especially the Peak District, it occupies a much drier habitat, forming extensive pure patches on ledges and inclined rock faces on limestone, typically near the base of vertical crags and below

underhangs, in places that receive little direct rain and where there is little competition. Altitudinal range: 0–300 m.

Its occurrence on tarmac and pavements is a fairly recent phenomenon, and it is probably increasing in these habitats.

Dioicous; capsules are extremely rare, mature in winter.

It is sometimes confused with other species of similar appearance, especially *Cirriphyllum crassinervium*, but there are probably few significant errors on the map. The plant from limestone rock ledges usually has slightly narrower leaves on average than the riparian form and was formerly recognised as a distinct species, *Brachythecium appleyardiae*. However there is no sharp discontinuity in leaf shape and Blockeel *et al.* (2005) concluded that *B. appleyardiae* was not a distinct species.



Suboceanic Temperate. W and S Europe, extending north to Holland, northern Germany and Italy, and south in the Mediterranean region to Spain, Corsica, Sardinia and Crete. Turkey, Israel, Lebanon. Western N America (California to British Columbia).

J.W. Bates, rev. T.L. Blockeel