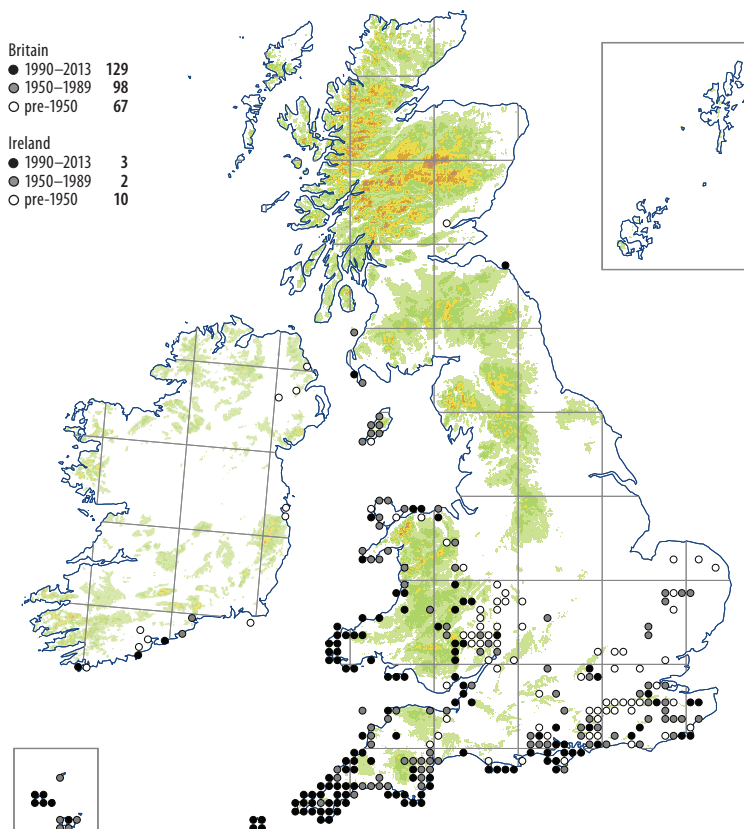


Scleropodium touretii



Axerophyte of well-drained soils and rocks in warm situations on both calcareous and lime-free substrates, on a wide range of formations including sandstone and igneous rocks. The wormlike shoots are most characteristic of cliffs, stable dunes and shingle, banks, paths and walls where drought, trampling or rabbit grazing produce a sparse, low turf. Indeed its tolerance of trampling makes it a conspicuous feature of some coastal paths. Associates in open habitats include ephemeral species of bare soil such as *Archidium alternifolium* and *Pleuroidium acuminatum*. It has a predilection for south-facing aspects but is not limited to them. In the Isles of Scilly it colonises bulb fields, and a significant number of inland records are from dry banks in woodland. Populations from shaded habitats on the Isles of Scilly have more slender shoots than the typical form and may resemble *Scleropodium cespitans* (Holyoak, 2012); they

occur among granite rocks under trees and on bulb field boundary walls made of granite rocks. Altitudinal range: 0–490 m.

It is much less common than formerly at inland sites, probably from more intensive land use and reduced rabbit-grazing following myxomatosis.

Dioicous; capsules are rare, mature in winter.

Mediterranean-Atlantic. A very common species in the Mediterranean region, extending in W Europe north to Denmark, east to Germany and Romania in C Europe. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey and the Near East. Western N America.

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