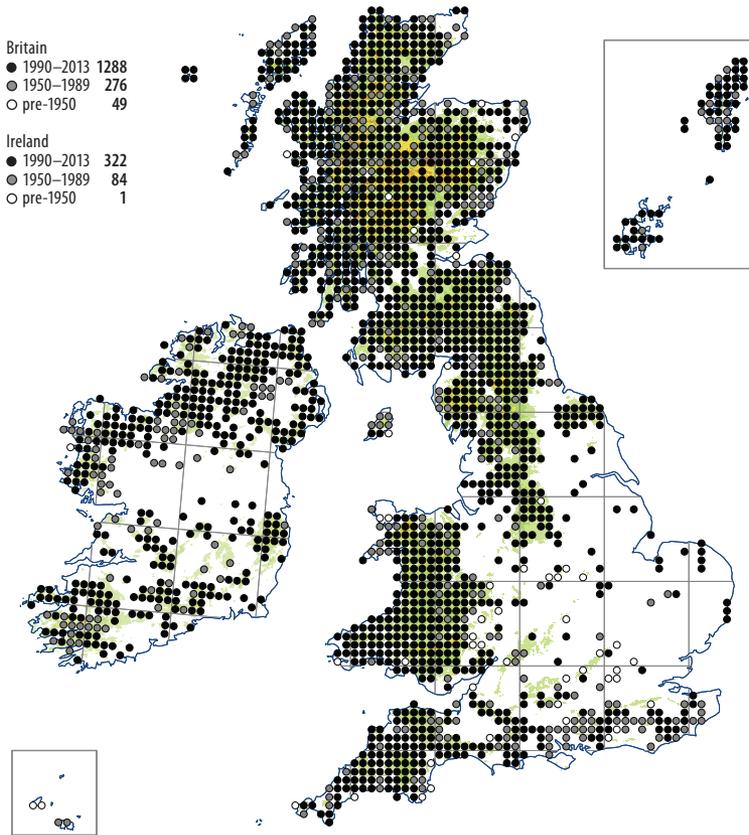


# Rhytidiadelphus loreus



A robust calcifuge species of humid habitats in woodland, forming coarse wefts on soil, boulders, fallen logs and banks. It is equally characteristic of montane habitats such as block scree, cliff ledges, damp heather moor, species-rich *Racomitrium* heath, montane willow scrub, alpine grassland, and snowbed vegetation. In western woods, typical associates include *Dicranum majus*, *D. scoparium*, *Hylocomium splendens*, *Plagiothecium undulatum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. quinquefarium* and *Thuidium tamariscinum*. In more open and upland habitats, the same associates occur, together with species such as *Barbilophozia floerkei*, *Ptilidium ciliare*, *Racomitrium lanuginosum* and *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*. In the lowlands it is largely confined to woodlands and sheltered thickets, occurring on the ground and over old logs, exceptionally on tree trunks, but it is also recorded from north-facing slopes

over chalk. Like *R. triquetrus*, it has been found recently in post-industrial sites such as scrub and light woodland on old coal tips and spoil heaps. Altitudinal range: 5–1170 m.

During the industrial era *R. loreus* declined or was eliminated in many parts of N, C and SE England because of sensitivity to SO<sub>2</sub> pollution. It disappeared almost completely from the South Pennine moorlands where it had once been frequent. In recent decades, however, it has shown clear signs of recovery; in addition to its occurrence in post-industrial sites, it has also turned up in woodland and moorland sites, initially as solitary patches. These may have originated from wind-borne spores.

Diocious; capsules are frequent in sheltered western woods but generally rare elsewhere, maturing during winter and spring.

Suboceanic Boreo-temperate. W and C Europe, east to the Baltic States and Ukraine, north to N Norway but scarcely extending east of the Scandinavian mountains; rare and montane in S Europe, extending to Portugal, Corsica and Bulgaria. Macaronesia (Azores, Madeira). Turkey. Western and eastern N America.

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