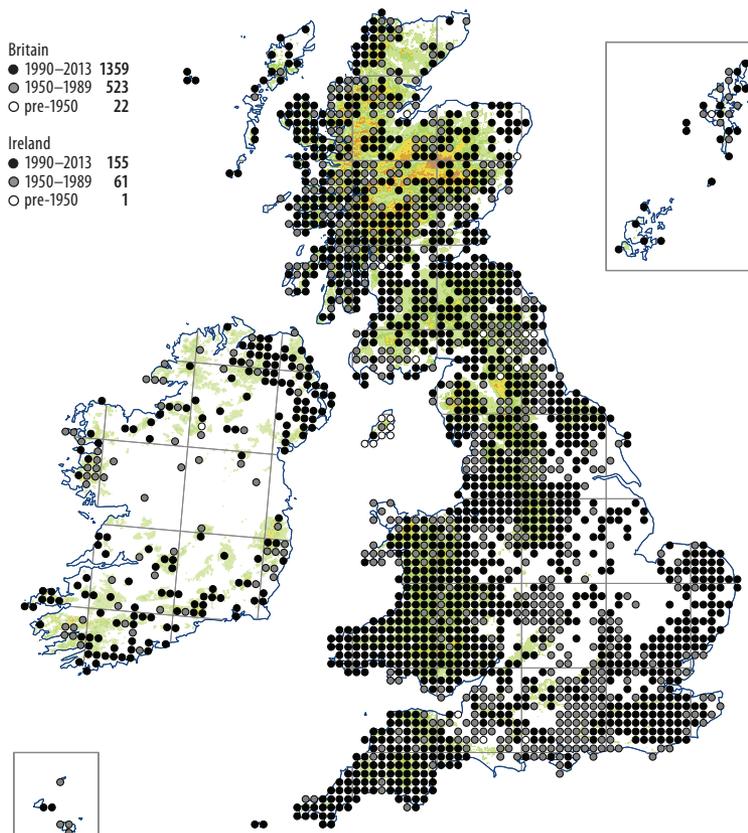


Plagiothecium succulentum



On soil banks, tree bases, rock ledges or, more rarely, old stone walls and decaying wood, commonly in woodland and hedgerows, often near or on the banks of streams, but also on lane banks, among rocks on moorland, and on sea cliffs. It generally tends to be calcifuge, frequently growing in deep shade on shallow humus overlying neutral sandy or clayey soils, but usually avoiding peat. In chalky areas it is confined to well-leached substrates. Common associates include *Atrichum undulatum*, *Dicranella heteromalla* and *Mnium hornum*. It has, however, some tolerance of base enrichment and has been recorded on old limestone walls. This is also evident in the mountains, where it is often found in places with a little basic influence, among boulders and on rock ledges. It sometimes also forms tufts by mountain springs. Altitudinal range: 0–1160 m.

Normally dioicous; capsules are rather rare, mature mainly in summer. Fusiform axillary gemmae are occasionally present in leaf axils and less often on leaf tips.

Plagiothecium succulentum and *P. nemorale* are hard to separate in the field and sometimes under the microscope; they are regarded as conspecific by some authors (e.g. Hemerik, 1989). In general, *P. succulentum* tends to be the commoner species in upland areas, though this is apparently not the case in Skye (Birks & Birks, 1974). There have undoubtedly been inconsistencies in the recording of the two species and there are likely to be some errors in the detail of the distribution.

Eurosiberian Boreo-temperate. In Europe north to Iceland and N Scandinavia, but rare or absent in much of the Mediterranean region. Doubtfully in Macaronesia. N Africa (reported only from Tunisia). Turkey. Its distribution elsewhere is poorly documented because of taxonomic uncertainties. It is not listed for eastern Europe and northern Asia by Ignatov *et al.* (2006) but is included in the moss flora of China (He, 2008).

N.G. Hodgetts, rev. T.L. Blockeel

