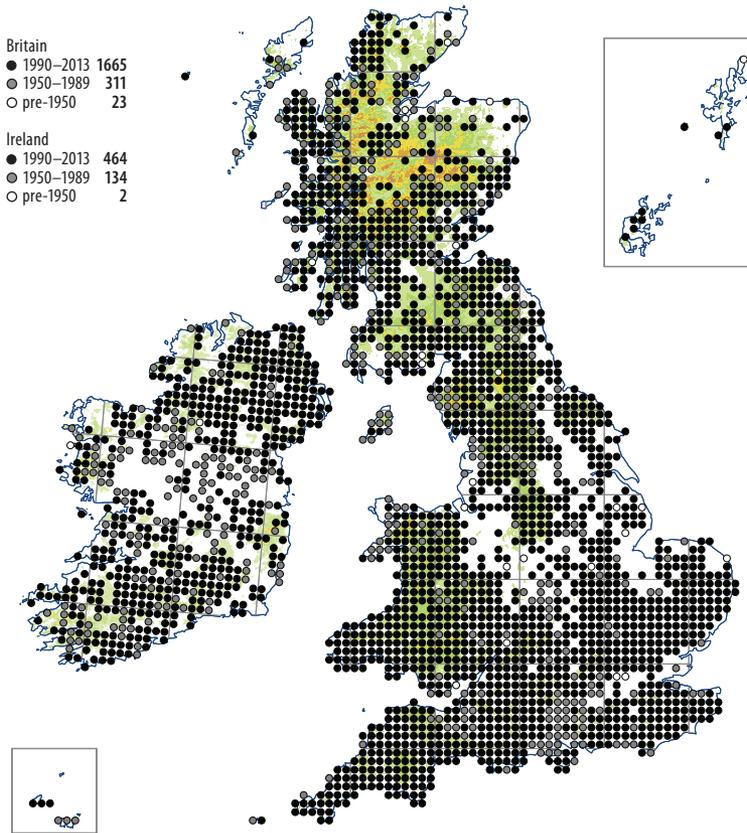


Thamnobryum alopecurum



A shade-tolerant species which occurs in several distinct habitats. It grows on the ground, on exposed tree roots and tree bases in woodland and on the banks of ditches and sheltered lanes, occurring on mildly acid, neutral or basic soils but in particular abundance in woods over chalk, limestone and calcareous boulder clay, where it often grows with *Plagiochila asplenioides*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum* and *Thuidium tamariscinum*. It is also found on dry or damp sheltered walls and rock faces, the sides of grikes in limestone pavement and of sandstone sea caves, holes and hollows in stabilised block scree and the floors of quarries and chalk pits. In its driest habitats it is usually calcicolous and the plants are sometimes very depauperate, losing their normal dendroid form. In the uplands it is a characteristic plant of rocks, boulders and masonry in or alongside torrents, streams and rivers, where

it often forms a dense band just above the water level, and of wet rock faces by waterfalls. In these waterside habitats it avoids the most acid sites, but does not behave as a calcicole (though it is particularly abundant on limestone). By watercourses *Sciuro-hypnum plumosum* is a common associate. Altitudinal range: 0–780 m.

Dioicous; capsules are rare in the south-east, occasional to frequent in the north and west, maturing from September to May. Balls of *Thamnobryum*, detached from disturbed carpets of the moss on woodland floors, continue to grow as they are kicked and blown around and may play a minor role in dispersal.

European Temperate. Widespread in Europe north to Iceland and the coast of N Norway, east to the Baltic States, Ukraine and Caucasus. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey and the Near East, Georgia to Azerbaijan, Iran. Records from elsewhere in Asia, especially the east, may belong to related species.

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