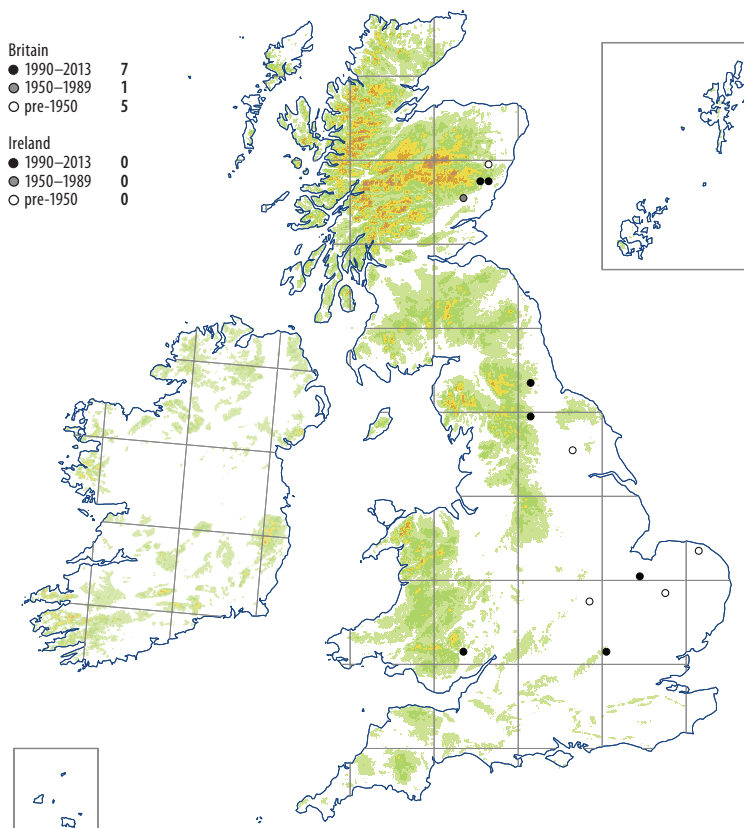


## Orthotrichum pumilum



A tiny epiphyte, recorded from the bark of ash, chestnut, elm, pear and willow trees, and in the case of one Scottish record on the base of a walnut tree. It is usually found in well-illuminated sites such as riversides and parkland. Recent records have been from a cultivated pear tree in an orchard, a sallow in wet woodland, on the trunk of an ash tree by a stream and an ash tree by a plantation. Altitudinal range: 5–200 m.

Like *Orthotrichum pallens*, its distribution has continental tendencies and it has always been rare in Britain and unknown in Ireland. Following reductions in atmospheric

pollution it is now somewhat more widely distributed than previously, and many of its occurrences probably have their origin in wind-borne spores from continental Europe.

Autoicous; capsules are common, mature in spring and summer. Gemmae are occasionally produced on the leaves but have apparently not been reported in Britain. They are also produced on the protonema in culture (Whitehouse, 1987).

Many older British records have proved to be erroneous. *O. pumilum* belongs to a difficult complex of species, and in a broad sense it includes *O. schimperi* Hammar, which is increasingly recognised as a distinct species (Hill *et al.*, 2006; Lara *et al.*, 2009; Lara & Garilleti, 2014). Not all British material has been critically revised but both segregates occur in Britain. *O. schimperi* is possibly the commoner of the two.

European Temperate. Europe north to C Scandinavia NW Russia and the S Urals. *O. schimperi* is more common than *O. pumilum* s.s. in S Europe. Canary Islands, N Africa. Turkey and the Near East, Caucasus to Kazakhstan, S Siberia and China. Widely in N America.

C.D. Preston, rev. T.L. Blockeel



◀ Afon Gavenny, Castle Meadows, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, 2014.  
Graham Motley