

Pimelea buxifolia

COMMON NAME

pimelea

SYNONYMS

Pimelea stylosa Colenso; *Pimelea subsimilis* Colenso; *Pimelea montana* Colenso

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea buxifolia Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PIMBUX

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub with tough to break hairy stems bearing pairs of small thick oval leaves and clusters of conspicuous white flowers inhabiting upland areas of the North island. Leaves 5-10mm long, surface often wrinkled. Flowers white or faintly pink, around 1cm wide. Fruit dry, enclosing a black seed.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Coromandel Peninsula; Mt Hikurangi and Raukumara Ranges; Volcanic Plateau; Kaimanawa, Kaweka, Ruahine, and Tararua Ranges)

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. Usually on acidic volcanic rocks such as rhyolite and allied pyroclastic ejecta. Mainly found as a dominant to subdominant component of shrubland-grassland, sparse scrub within tussock grassland, occasionally forming monospecific shrubland



Mt Ruapehu, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Ruapehu, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A much-branched, erect shrub up to 1 m tall. Branches and branchlets ascending; branchlets muricate, clad in short, villous, often brownish, hairs. Node buttresses short (0.5 mm), lunate, dark brown or black, and may be prominent after leaf fall. Internodes 2–4 mm long. Bark grey-brown, aging to grey or black. Leaves decussate, usually uniform in size, imbricate, ascending, later patent, on petioles 0.5–1.0 mm long. Lamina dull green, olive green to bronze-green, thick and coriaceous, 5–10 × 3–5 mm, elliptic to ovate, keeled, acute (often blunt-pointed), sometimes obtuse, base cuneate to angustate. Margins thickened, slightly down-turned; midvein prominent below; lateral vein pattern camptodromous but often obscure; stomata only on under sides. Inflorescences few to many-flowered, pedicels 0.3 mm long, persistent. Involucral bracts 4, the same size as leaves or broader (10 × 7 mm). Plants gynodioecious. Flowers hairy on outside; inside sparsely hairy in tube, hairless in ovary portion; fragrant, white or faint pink or rarely deep pink, lower tube red. Calyx lobes open in salverform fashion. Female tube to 5.5 mm long, ovary portion 3 mm, calyx lobes 2.5 × 1.3 mm, staminodes short, at mouth of tube. Female tube to 10 mm long, ovary portion 3 mm, calyx lobes 3.5 × 2 mm. Anther filaments inserted below mouth of tube; anthers golden yellow. Ovary with abundant hair at summit and sparsely hairy to base. Fruits ovoid, green, drying brown, 4.2 mm long. Seeds ovoid 3.8 × 1.7 mm. Dried hypanthia persistent dispersing with fruits inside.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the erect, stout shrub-forming habit with ascending hairy branches, and usually dark dull green, olive green or bronze-green, thick and leathery, glabrous elliptic to ovate leaves. Most likely to be confused with *Hebe odora* and *H. venustula* from which non-flowering plants can be recognised by the absence of a leaf-bud sinus, hairy branchlets, and by the stems which never snap off cleanly, rather they produce long bark, leathery bark peels which can be difficult to break without a knife.

FLOWERING

September - May

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Fickle. Can be grown from cuttings, and occasionally seed germinates in garden conditions. Does best in full sun on a well drained soil. However, even well established plants are prone to sudden collapse.

ETYMOLOGY

pimelea: *Pimeleoides* means “resembling *Pimelea*”, a genus in the family Thymelaeaceae (Greek, -oides = resembling, like).

buxifolia: Boxleaf

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2008). Description adapted from Burrows (2008)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows, C.J. 2008: Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 1. The taxonomic treatment of seven endemic, glabrous-leaved species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 46: 127-176.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-buxifolia/>