

Pimelea aridula subsp. oliga

COMMON NAMES

pimelea

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR,

RF

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy small shrub with pairs of greyish hairy narrow pointed leaves inhabiting very dry rocky sites in Marlborough. Twigs hairy, flexible. Leaves 6-15mm long by 2-3mm wide, widest at base, pointed, hairy on both surfaces. Flowers white, in clusters. Fruit dry, enclosing black seed.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A medium-sized, slender upright shrub, up to 0.7 m. Long-stemmed plants may be fastigiate; short-stemmed plants often have more divergent branches. Branching mainly sympodial. Main stems flexible. Young branchlets brown, moderately to densely covered with long hair; internodes 0.5-2.0 mm; old stems at the base may be stout (= 10 mm diameter), grey-brown, glabrous. Node buttresses lunate, brown, hairy, often masked by hairs on young stems, moderately conspicuous on leafless stems. Leaves usually decussate, on short, red petioles (0.5 mm), rarely alternate on some young branchlets, ascending, loosely imbricate. Lamina 6-15 × 2-3 mm, medium green, slightly adaxially concave, narrow-ovate, acute, base cuneate, both surfaces sparsely to moderately densely covered by appressed white sericeous to villous hairs, comose at tip. Stomata on both leaf surfaces. Inflorescences terminal, 5-10-flowered, sometimes in small clusters. Involucral bracts similar in size to adjacent leaves or slightly wider (8.0-10 × 3.2 mm), partly hiding the flowers. Receptacle densely hairy. Plants gynodioecious. Flowers white, on short pedicels (0.5 mm), densely hairy outside, internally glabrous. Female tube 3.0 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 1.3 × 0.7 mm; hermaphrodite tube 6.0 mm long, ovary portion 2.5 mm, calyx lobes 2.0 × 1.3 mm. Anther dehiscence introrse. Ovary hairy from summit to two thirds of the way down. Fruits ovoid, dry, brown, 4.0 × 2.3 mm. Seeds ovoid 3.0-4.0 × 1.9-2.1 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Pimelea aridula subsp. *oliga* is most likely to be confused with *P. concinna*, a species with which it is sometimes sympatric. Both *Pimelea* form relatively tall shrubs with mostly upright growth habits. From *Pimelea concinna*, *P. aridula* subsp. *oliga* can be distinguished by the leaves, which are 8-12 mm rather than 5-8 mm long. *Pimelea aridula* subsp. *oliga* differs from subsp. *aridula* by its allopatric distribution (being geographically confined to Marlborough) and its shorter growth habit with more slender, flexible stems, and by the narrow-elliptic to narrow-ovate leaves whose surfaces are usually sparsely to moderately invested by long sericeous to villous white hairs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Eastern Marlborough, relatively close to the coast in the Flaxbourne River and Wharekiri Stream catchments. Further inland in the Awatere Valley, Chalk Range and middle Clarence Valley (West of the Seaward Kaikoura Range)

HABITAT

Lowland to montane. On limestone outcrops and screes (occasionally on sandstone)



THREATS

Pimelea aridula subsp. *oliga* is listed in Appendix 2 of de Lange *et al.* (2011; p.90) as *Pimelea* aff. *aridula* (CHR 277514; South Marlborough). Burrows (2011) offers no data to support or refute that status, though he does indicate this subspecies is highly threatened, citing farming as a major threat through causing habitat loss. Burrows (2011) also provides data to suggest that introgression with other *Pimelea* may be a threat. This needs to be properly studied.

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea aridula subsp. *oliga* C.J.Burrows

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - January

FRUITING

December - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. Does best in a free-draining, sunny site with fertile soil. Dislikes competition from taller plants and humidity. Will not tolerate being shaded out. An excellent pot plant or small shrub for a rockery.

ETYMOLOGY

pimelea: from Greek *pimelē*, meaning "lard" or "soft fat," presumably referring to the oily seeds or fleshy cotyledons.

NVS CODE

PIMASO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RR

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, RR

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows, C.J. 2011: Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 5. The taxonomic treatment of five endemic species with both adaxial and abaxial leaf hair. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 49: 367-412.

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Hitchmough, R.; Townsend, A.J. 2009: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand (2008 revision). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47: 61-96.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 September 2011): Description based on Burrows (2011)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-aridula-subsp-oliga/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-aridula-subsp-oliga/>

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