

# Pimelea ignota

## COMMON NAME

pinātoro, pimelea

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2009)

## FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

## AUTHORITY

Pimelea ignota C.J.Burrows et Courtney

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, DP, RR, RF, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | Data Deficient

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Very rare low shrub with erect hair-banded reddish stems bearing overlapping pairs of bright green pointed leaves and hairy white flowers with a reddish body and white fruit inhabiting the Tai Tapu coast of Nelson. Leaves 8-12mm long by 4-5.5mm wide, leathery, edge upturned.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic: South Island: North-West Nelson, Tai Tapu Coast

## HABITAT

Burrows (2009) states "On thin, infertile, strongly leached loess over hard Cretaceous conglomerate, in short manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) scrub, near coast".



Whole plant flowering, Greenhills.

Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken:

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Close up - flowering cluster, Greenhills.

Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken:

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A small to medium-sized, erect to sprawling shrub, 200–300 mm high, with clustered lateral branches. Prone stems often longer. On young branchlets bands of sparse, moderately long hair usually extend the length of the internode; internodes 0.3–2 mm long; older stems glabrate to glabrous, grey-brown. Node buttresses smooth, dark brown, extending the length of the internode, conspicuous on leafless stems. Leaves decussate, loosely imbricate, coriaceous, crowded on upper branchlets, on short (0.5–1.0 mm) reddish petioles. Mature leaves glabrous, young leaves usually with a few short hairs at tip. Lamina 8–12 × 4–5.5 mm, broad-elliptic to broad-ovate, medium green, flat or concave above, margin thickened, slightly upturned, midvein evident but not prominent below, lateral veins obscure; obtuse, acute or slightly acuminate, sometimes with a small apicula, base cuneate. Stomata on both leaf surfaces. Inflorescences terminal on branchlets, up to 4-flowered (from count of old pedicels). Involucral bracts 4, similar in size to adjacent leaves (7.2–8.0 × 4.5–5.0 mm). Plants probably gynodioecious. Flowers white, on short pedicels (0.3 mm), tube and calyx lobes hairy on outside, inside hairless. Female tube 6 mm long, ovary portion 4 mm, calyx lobes 2.4 × 1.3 mm. No information is available on hermaphrodite flowers or anthers. Ovary with relatively sparse hair at summit. Fruits ovoid, fleshy, white, opaque 6.2 × 3.5 mm (estimate). Seeds ovoid, 3 × 1.6 mm, thin crest.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Burrows (2009) states that this “species is distinguished by its sprawling to erect habit, prominent node buttresses on leafless stems, bands of sparse hair on internodes, and medium-green, uniformly sized, flat to concave (upper surface) leaves, usually with sparse short hairs near the tip, and stomata on both leaf surfaces. It differs from *P. gnidia* by its generally smaller size, hairy stems, and by the leaf and fruit character states”. This species is now known from seven individuals. Burrows (2009) had stated that “features of floral biology so far are known from only 3 female flowers, each from different parents; 2 flowers contained nearly mature seeds. Judged by relative positions of old receptacles, flowering occurs infrequently”. This species had hitherto been regarded as a hybrid, and indeed its extreme scarcity in the wild, the observation of poor flowering, along with its occurrence in an area previously identified by Burrows (2008) as one of rife hybridism involving *P. longifolia* and *P. gnidia* (so why not other *Pimelea* species?), strongly suggests this is still the case. However, since Burrows (2009) published this species, seedlings have been successfully germinated and morphologically at least these appear to be uniform and stable. Nevertheless further research into this species status perhaps using modern molecular methods is still desired.

## FLOWERING

November

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

January

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. *Pimelea ignota* has now been successfully raised from cuttings and less easily from seed which is inclined to damp off.

## THREATS

Previously listed as Data Deficient by de Lange et al. (2009) (as *Pimelea* (g) (CHR 358213; Te Tai Tapu)). Currently known from seven plants and five herbarium specimens gathered from much the same site over the last 62 years. The oldest known plant died in 2010 at the age of 30 years at least (Simon Walls, DOC, Takaka, pers. comm.). The taxonomic status of *P. ignota* still needs critical evaluation using modern taxonomic techniques.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 11 November 2009. Description based on Burrows (2009).

## 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.

Burrows, C.J. 2009: Genus Pimelea (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 3. The taxonomic treatment of six endemic hairy-leaved species. New Zealand Journal of Botany 47: 325-354.

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 New Zealand Journal of Botany 47: 61-96.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Pimelea ignota* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-ignota/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

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