

Pimelea oreophila subsp. ephaistica

COMMON NAMES

pimelea

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Data Deficient

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Very low growing sprawling shrub with hairy thin flexible twigs bearing pairs of dark blue-green pointed leaves that are sparsely hairy underneath, hairy white flowers and red fruit inhabiting the central North Island. Twigs 2.5 to 3.5mm thick. Leaves 4-8mm long by 2-4mm wide, widest at base.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Procumbent, trailing shrub, with few to many, slender (2.0–2.5 mm), brown, flexible young stems, these invested with a moderate cover of short, appressed hairs, internodes 2–4mm long, node buttresses lunate to elongate, not prominent on leafless stems. Older stems slender (to 3.5 mm), dark brown, up to 500 mm long, occasionally with adventitious roots, sometimes climbing in upright shrubs. Reduced in stature on exposed sites with rocky substrates, sometimes forming short-stemmed, appressed rosettes. Branching mainly sympodial. Young stems brown, moderately densely covered in short or moderately long, white, grey or sometimes yellowish appressed hair cover; older stems darker brown, glabrate. Internodes of young stems 1–5mm long. Node buttresses lunate to elongate, or sometimes extending the full length of internodes, with bands of hair between; usually not very prominent on leafless stems. Leaves decussate, on short (0.5–1.0 mm), often red petioles, ascending at first, usually becoming patent, often with a distichous appearance on prostrate stems. Lamina 4–8 × 2–4 mm, glaucous or medium to dark green, usually ovate, narrow, flat, often with a red margin flat, mid-vein evident; tip acute but usually blunt-pointed, sometimes obtuse; base cuneate; abaxial hairs short, white, usually sparse on margins, midrib and tip, often becoming glabrous as leaves age; stomata on both adaxial and abaxial surfaces. Inflorescences terminal, 5–15-flowered, receptacle densely covered in short hairs. Involucral bracts 4, the same size as ordinary leaves, or larger (6 × 4 mm). Plants gynodioecious. Flowers white, fragrant, on short pedicels (0.3 mm) densely covered with short hairs outside; inside hairless. Female tube 2.5–4.0 mm long, ovary portion 3 mm, calyx lobes 1–2 × 1 mm; hermaphrodite tube 4–6 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 2.0–3.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm. Anther dehiscence introrse. Ovary with dense clump of short or long hairs at summit. Fruits ovoid, fleshy, red, 4 × 3 mm. Seeds ovoid 2.7 × 2.3 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

The only subspecies of *P. oreophila* to be found in the North Island where it is endemic to the central North Island Volcanic Plateau and adjacent western Kaimanawa and northern Ruahine Ranges. It is distinguished from the other subspecies of *Pimelea oreophila* by the usually flat, ovate leaves whose abaxial surface margins, mid-vein and apices are sparsely covered in short, caducous hairs; and by the slender young stems (2.0–2.5mm thick).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Pureora, Hauhangaroa Range, Central Volcanic Plateau, western Kaimanawa and northern Ruahine Ranges)



HABITAT

Montane to alpine, on developed and recent (skeletal) soils derived from tephra amongst tall and short tussock grasslands, in open shrublands, low scrub and in *Schoenus pauciflorus* sedgeland.

THREATS

Probably not threatened. However as *Pimelea oreophila* subsp. *lepta* was not assessed by Burrows (2011) using the New Zealand Threat Classification Manual (Townsend et al. 2008) it has no valid threat assessment. So at this stage it seems best to recommend a interim threat assessment of "Data Deficient".

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea oreophila subsp. *ephaistica* C.J.Burrows

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2011)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September - February

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood and hardwood cuttings. Does best in a well drained soil and planted in a sunny situation (such as in a rockery or pot)

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

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

oreophila: Mountain lover

NVS CODE

PIMOSE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Data Deficient

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows, C.J. 2011: Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 4. The taxonomic treatment of ten endemic abaxially hairy-leaved species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 49: 41–106.

Townsend, A.J.; de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Molloy, J.; Miskelly, C.; Duffy, C. 2008: *The New Zealand Threat Classification System manual*. Wellington, Department of Conservation.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (28 April 2011). Description adapted from Burrows (2011).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-oreophila-subsp-ephaistica/>

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25 May 2026