

Pimelea oreophila subsp. hetera

COMMON NAMES

pimelea

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Procumbent, trailing shrub, with few to many, moderately thick (2.5–3.5 mm), light brown, flexible young stems, these moderately densely covered in short, appressed hairs, internodes 1–4 mm, node buttresses lunate, not prominent on leafless stems. Older stems brown, thick (to 5 mm), 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 1–5 mm 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, elliptic to ovate, medium green, flat to slightly keeled, sometimes red-margined, mid-vein evident; tip acute but usually blunt-pointed, sometimes obtuse; base cuneate; abaxial hairs dull white, short, varying from very sparse to a continuous but only moderately dense cover, sometimes tufted at the 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

Distinguished from the other subspecies of *Pimelea oreophila* by the short or long leaves whose abaxial surface is either sparsely or moderately densely covered in short hairs and by the consistent absence of an apical coma. *Pimelea oreophila* subsp. *hetera* is also recognised in the field by its geographic restriction to Nelson, Buller, Marlborough and northern Canterbury.



Up close of flower and foliage, Mt Arthur, Tasman. Photographer: Matt Ward, Date taken: 19/11/2020, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Terminal flowering branchlet. Photographer: Matt Ward, Date taken: 19/11/2020, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Nelson, Marlborough, northern Canterbury to Hanmer and the upper Hurunui River).

HABITAT

Montane to alpine (usually above the treeline) in tall tussock grasslands sometimes on rock and debris slides at lower elevations.

THREATS

Probably not threatened. However as *Pimelea oreophila* subsp. *hetera* 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. *hetera* 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

PIMOSH

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows CJ. 2011. Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 4. The taxonomic treatment of ten endemic abaxially hairy-leaved species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 49(1): 41–106.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2010.536558>.

Townsend AJ, de Lange PJ, Norton DA, Molloy J, Miskelly C, Duffy C. 2008. The New Zealand Threat Classification System manual. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 35 p.

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-hetera/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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

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25 May 2026