

# Pimelea poppelwellii

## COMMON NAMES

Poppelwell's pimelea

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Shrub to 80cm tall with reddish twigs bearing pairs of fleshy bright green pointed leaves with a ridge on the underside and hairy white flowers inhabiting the vicinity of the Garvie Ranges, Eyre Mountains and Hump Ridge. Leaves 6-10mm long by 4-6mm wide. Flowers to 9mm long. Fruit dry.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect much-branched shrub up to 1 m or more tall. All parts except leaf-axils glabrous; branches stout, bark dark red-brown. Leaves close-set, subimbricate, on stout, fleshy petioles up to 1 mm long; lamina erect to subpatent, 6-10 x 4-6 mm, dark green, paler below and more or less keeled, broad-ovate to ovate-oblong, apex obtuse to subacute, abruptly narrowed at base; firmly fleshy, thick and coriaceous; margins distinctly though slightly thickened. Subfloral leaves distinctly membranous and broader than other leaves. Inflorescence in 5-16-flowered heads. Perianth white or pale rose, densely silky-hairy; tube 6-9 mm long, lobes 2-3 mm long, ovate-oblong to oblong. Fruit 2 mm long, ovoid, dark brown to black, hairy at apex.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Morphologically perhaps closest to *P. traversii* which it closely resembles except that it has red-brown rather than dark-brown to almost black bark, and the leaves are petiolate and close-set to subimbricate rather than quadrifariouly imbricating and sessile.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Central Otago and northern Southland. Mainly recorded from the Garvie Range.

## HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine, often extending to lower elevations in distributed habitats. A species of Snow tussock (*Chionochloa* spp.) grassland with herbs, and also of low shrubland and rocky sites.

## THREATS

Rather poorly known so its exact distribution is unclear and further field work is needed

## GENUS

*Pimelea*



Umbrella Range, Otago. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Flowers (dried; top), fruit (middle), seed (bottom). Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Pimelea poppelwellii* Petrie

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November – March

## FRUITING

January – May

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Dry achenes are dispersed by wind and possibly ants (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Not known in cultivation. Probably easy from cuttings but difficult to maintain like so many New Zealand *Pimelea*.

## 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.

**poppelwellii**: After Poppelwell

## NVS CODE

PIMPOP

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, RR, Sp, TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the “[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)” Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

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

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

### **ATTRIBUTION**

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 August 2003. Description modified from Allan (1961) but see also Burrows (2008).

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### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

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### **MORE INFORMATION**

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

### **PDF DATE**

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