

Pimelea prostrata subsp. ventosa

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low growing shrub with rough twigs bearing dense stiff hairs towards the tip and bearing pairs of blue-green leaves that join the stem at a small bump, hairy white flowers and white fruit inhabiting southern South Island coast. Leaves 4.5–10mm long by 2.3–4mm wide, often red edged.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A small to medium-sized, sparsely branched, prostrate shrub with main stems to 300 mm long. **Branching** both sympodial and lateral but the former is more common. **Internodes** 1–3 mm long, with a sparse to moderately dense cover of fine but stiff hair. **Node buttresses** dark brown, short (0.3 mm or sometimes to 0.6 mm), lunate, moderately conspicuous on leafless stems. The internodes of young stems are covered by a brown pellicle which fragments as they grow, leaving a muricate patterning. **Leaves** ascendant, imbricate, or more distant, on short (0.8–1.0 mm) red petioles. Lamina broad elliptic to ovate, 4.5–10 × 2.3–4 mm, light green, glaucous, slightly fleshy, adaxially concave or very slightly keeled, margins thickened, often red, upturned; midvein obscure abaxially, obtuse, base cuneate. **Inflorescences** terminal, 4–6-flowered. **Involucral bracts** 4, larger than adjacent leaves (5 × 7 mm). **Receptacle** very hairy. **Flowers** white, very hairy outside; inside hairless. **Female tube** 2.5 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 1.5 × 1 mm. **Hermaphrodite tube** 4.2 mm long, ovary portion very wrinkled, 2 mm, calyx lobes 3 × 2 mm. **Ovary** with a tuft of short hair at summit and fewer hairs down to the base. **Fruits** ovoid to globose, fleshy, white, opaque, 4.9 × 3.0 mm. **Seeds** ovoid, 3.2 × 1.8 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

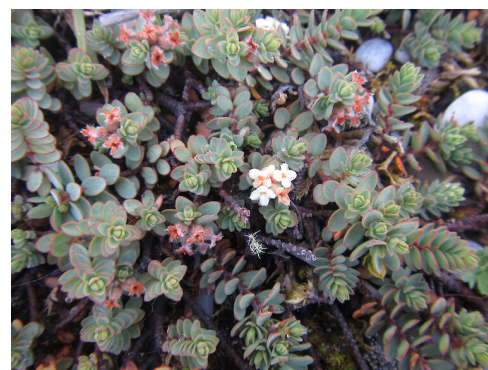
Plants of the *Pimelea prostrata* complex are distinguished by the prostrate to decumbent growth habit; by the glabrous to sparse or moderate hair covering on young stem internodes and by the thin and pliable, completely glabrous leaves with stomata clearly visible on both leaf surfaces. *Pimelea prostrata* subsp. *ventosa* is distinguished from subsp. *prostrata*, subsp. *seismica*, subsp. *thermalis* and subsp. *vulcanica* by the lunate node buttresses; relatively densely hairy young stems that become muricate with age, and by the obtuse leaf tips.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (southeastern Otago, south coast of Southland and islands in Foveaux Strait and south-western Fiordland).



Pressed specimen from Puysegur Point, Fiordland. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 06/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

HABITAT

Coastal, on rock outcrops, cliffs, sand dunes.

THREATS

Burrows (2009) is vague about details. The implication is that this subspecies is secure in Fiordland but that it needs better survey to ascertain its status elsewhere.

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea prostrata subsp. *ventosa* C.J.Burrows

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2009)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–May

FRUITING

November–July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and rooted pieces. Seed is difficult to germinate. Best grown in a well drained soil in full sun. An excellent plant for the rockery.

ETYMOLOGY

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

prostrata: Prostrate

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, RR 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

Burrows CJ. 2009. Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 2. The endemic *Pimelea prostrata* and *Pimelea urvilliana* species complexes. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47(2): 163–229.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00288250909509804>.

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Burrows (2009).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-prostrata-subsp-ventosa/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026