

Pimelea prostrata subsp. vulcanica

COMMON NAMES

pinātoro

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low growing shrub with sparsely hairy short twigs bearing pairs of narrow blue-green leaves that join the stem at a small ridge, hairy white flowers and white fruit inhabiting the central North Island. Leaves 4-6mm long by 1.2-2mm wide, with a ridge underneath, often red edged.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A small to moderately large, much-branched shrub with prostrate habit. Main stems to 600 mm long, grey-brown, relatively thin and flexible, except near the base. Branching is mainly lateral, with long, thin, flexible branchlets; secondary branchlets on these are short. Young branchlets are only sparsely hairy. Internodes 0.5–4.0 mm long. Older stems glabrous, grey-brown. Node buttresses brown, elongate, usually the whole length of the internode, with a strip of fine, short hairs between them, not very prominent on leafless stems. Leaves ascendant and imbricate; patent on laxer branchlets, on very short (0.1–0.3 mm) red petioles. Lamina narrow elliptic, 4–6 × 1.2–2 mm, glabrous, usually glaucous, medium green or sometimes yellowish-green, often red-margined, slightly keeled, acute. Mid-vein evident abaxially, sometimes reddish. Leaves on the very short lateral branchlets are relatively small. Inflorescences terminal on branchlets, 2–7-flowered. Involucral bracts 4, similar in size to adjacent leaves. Flowers white, moderately hairy outside; inside hairless or sparsely hairy in upper tube and ovary portion. Female tube 2.8 mm long, ovary portion 2.2 mm, calyx lobes 1.7 × 1.1 mm; hermaphrodite tube 4 mm long, ovary portion 1.5 mm, calyx lobes 2 × 1.4 mm. Ovary with sparse hairs at summit and about one-quarter of the way down. Fruits ovoid, fleshy, white, opaque, 4 × 2.5 mm. Seeds narrow-ovoid, 3 × 1.3 mm, thin crest.

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. *vulcanica* is distinguished from subsp. *prostrata*, subsp. *seismica*, subsp. *thermalis* and subsp. *ventosa* by the node buttresses elongate to covering the entire internode length; by the short, inconspicuous, secondary lateral branches and by the true leaves which are slightly keeled, up to 6.0 × 1.2–2 mm and which have acute apices



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DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island: South Auckland and Taupo district hills (abundant on the summit of Mt Tarawera, slopes of the central North Island volcanoes, and on plains of the Volcanic Plateau, and south of Murupara); scattered on Huiarau, Kaimanawa, and north-west Ruahine Ranges.

HABITAT

Short grassland, shrubland with open grassy areas and sometimes on margins of fine volcanic ejecta patches (scoria, lapillii) and alluvium, colluvium derived from such debris; also on soils derived from tephra, on bared areas in grassland and open scrubland.

THREATS

Burrows (2009) describes this subspecies as plentiful though he discusses threats which include heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and succession to taller vegetation. It probably warrants a precautionary listing of Data Deficient.

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

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

SYNONYMS

Pimelea heterophylla Colenso

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September - May

FRUITING

October - 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

vulcanica: Of volcanoes

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Burrows (2009).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

27 May 2026