

Pimelea pseudolyallii

COMMON NAMES

pimelea

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low growing scrambling shrub with hairy twigs bearing pairs of green pointed leaves that are silkily hairy underneath and bearing hairy white flowers and red fruit inhabiting the eastern South Island. Leaves 5-15mm long by 3-6.5mm wide, hairs project beyond margin to give a silver-edged effect.

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust, procumbent shrub with few to many flexible stems up to 800 × c.80 mm, but sometimes climbing in erect shrubs or tussocks; occasionally with adventitious roots. In exposed sites plant size is reduced and plants maybe appressed, with short, spreading stems. Branching sympodial and lateral. Branchlets light brown, moderately densely to sparsely covered in long, white, appressed hairs; internodes 2–6 mm long. Older stems glabrate to glabrous, smooth, dark brown. Node buttresses lunate, brown, often masked by hairs, not prominent on leafless stems. Leaves decussate, ascending at first, soon becoming patent, sometimes appearing distichous in appressed plants, on reddish petioles 0.5–1.5mm long. Lamina medium to dark green, narrow-ovate to broad-ovate or elliptic to broad-elliptic or sometimes oblong, 5.0–15 × 3.0–6.5 mm, flat or slightly keeled, margin slightly down-turned, mid-vein clearly evident, sunken adaxially; tip acute, base cuneate; abaxial surface moderately to densely covered with long, white and glistening or sometimes yellowish, appressed hairs; stomata only on abaxial leaf surface. Inflorescences terminal, loose, 5–12-flowered. Involucral bracts 4, usually wider than adjacent ordinary leaves (10–7 mm). Receptacle densely hairy, sometimes slightly convex. Plants gynodioecious. Flowers white, scented, on short (0.6 mm) pedicels, very hairy outside, inside hairless. Female tube 3–4 mm long, ovary portion wrinkled, 2.3 mm, calyx lobes 2–1 mm; hermaphrodite tube 5–6 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes ascending, 2.5 × 1.4 mm. Anther dehiscence introrse. Ovary hair cover dense near summit, sparse to half way down. Fruits fleshy, red, broad-ovoid 4 × 3 mm. Seeds 2.6 × 1.3 mm.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Despite its name this species is most similar to members of the *P. aridula* Cockayne complex and has little resemblance to *P. lyallii* Hook.f. From the common South Island form of *P. aridula* it differs by its weakly erect, spreading (up to 0.25 x 1 m) rather than stoutly erect (up to 1 x 1 m) growth habit, green to dark leaves which are glabrate above, silky hairy beneath (rather than green and copiously silvery hairy throughout), and spreading rather than ascending. Superficially similar to the southern form of *Pimelea villosa* which has hairs without the long silky tips and are more olive in colour.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand. South Island (easterly in Marlborough, Canterbury, North Otago)

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. In open montane beech (*Nothofagus* spp.) forest near bush line, subalpine scrub, amongst shrubs in tussock grassland and within tussock grassland.

THREATS

Not Threatened. Apparently a naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species. Burrows (2011) notes that there is extensive introgressive hybridism present between this species and especially members of the *P. oreophila* complex (see Notes). Nevertheless he accepts the current threat listing of "At Risk/Naturally Uncommon" as valid.

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea pseudolyallii Allan

SYNONYMS

Pimelea pseudo-lyallii Allan

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Burrows (2011) notes and provides examples (based on some morphological evidence) that there is extensive introgressive hybridism between *P. pseudolyallii* and other *Pimelea* (such as *P. oreophila*) both within and outside the range of *P. pseudolyallii* s.s. Burrows (2011) includes plants from the western Wellington coastline previously regarded as an unnamed race of *P. aridula* (see de Lange et al. 2009) as part of this hybrid swarm. This hypothesis needs further testing using modern molecular methods.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - January

FRUITING

December - February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. In a garden setting this species forms a somewhat sprawling sub-shrub. It has attractive pink, pinkish-white to red fruit.

ETYMOLOGY

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

pseudolyallii: Deceptively similar to *Pimelea lyallii*

NVS CODE

PIMPSE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, 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

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Hitchmough, R.; Townsend, A.J. 2009: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand (2008 revision). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47: 61–96.

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.

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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MORE INFORMATION

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

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