

Pimelea suteri

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Small shrub with erect thin hairy twigs bearing pairs of widely spaced pointed leaves that are hairy underneath, hairy white flowers and red fruit inhabiting ultramafic areas in the northern South Island and on Mid Dome (Southland). Leaves often brownish, 5-8mm long by 1-2mm wide.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, much-branched shrub. In open, exposed sites relatively compact and often appressed or decumbent, to 800 mm tall, with short, stiff stems. In shaded sites stems slender, procumbent, flexible, to 300 mm long. Branching sympodial and lateral, young stems medium brown, moderately densely covered in short, appressed hairs; internodes 1–2 mm (exposed sites), 3–5 mm (sheltered sites). Older stems dark brown to black, glabrate to glabrous. Node buttresses lunate to elongate, brown, hairy, not prominent on leafless stems. Leaves decussate, ascending, becoming patent, on very short (0.2 mm) petioles or sessile. Lamina olive green, linear-lanceolate, sometimes slightly falcate, 5.0–8.0 × 0.8–2.0 mm, slightly keeled, may be inrolled when dry; tip acute, but blunt; base cuneate, mid-vein evident; abaxial surface covered with sparse, short hairs, along mid-vein and margins of young leaves, often with a small tuft at the tip; older leaves glabrous; stomata on both adaxial and abaxial surfaces. Inflorescences terminal, loose, 4–10-flowered. Involucral bracts 4, wider than ordinary leaves (5.0 × 2.8 mm). Receptacles have dense, short hairs. Plants gynodioecious. Flowers white, on short (0.1 mm) pedicels, calyx lobes ascending, outside covered in very dense short hairs; inside hairless. Female tube 4.2 mm long, ovary portion 2.8 mm, calyx lobes 2 × 1 mm; hermaphrodite tube 4.5 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 2.0 × 1.2 mm. Anther dehiscence introrse. Ovary with small cluster of long hairs at summit. Fruits ovoid, red, fleshy, 4 × 2 mm. Seeds 2.3 × 1.2 mm. Crest very thin.

SIMILAR TAXA

Until the ongoing revision of New Zealand *Pimelea* is completed (see other fact sheets) it is difficult to provide a set of reliable characters that distinguish *Pimelea suteri* from allied species (in particular members of the *P. oreophila* complex). Allan (1961) distinguished *Pimelea suteri* by the leaves bearing (at least when young) hairs (on the margins and apex), by the lamina being narrow-linear (which agrees mostly with the revised description offered by Burrows (2011) 8-9 mm long, and by the stiff “tortuous” branches. These features occur also in *P. oreophila* which was omitted from Allan’s *Pimelea* treatment. In the past there has been much confusion between *P. suteri* and *P. oreophila*. It would seem that the best way to separate *P. suteri* from *P. oreophila* is by its restriction to ultramafic substrates; by its often erect, compact growth habit; short, stiff branches and narrow linear-lanceolate leaves. In time, once the *Pimelea* revision is completed other characters will become evident

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Red Hills, Mt Dun, ultramafites of Richmond Range, West Dome).

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. On ultramafic rocks in open, stony ground, or in shrubby or well-vegetated tussock grassland.

THREATS

Pimelea suteri is a narrow-range, biologically sparse, obligate endemic of ultramafic substrates and their associated soils. Although it is common in the northern part of its range it is rather scarce in the southern part of its range. No threats have been identified for this species other than the spread of wildling pines on the Red Hills in the upper Wairau.

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea suteri Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September - February

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from semi-hardwood and hardwood cuttings. Usually rather slow growing and does best when planted in a well drained, sunny situation (such as in a rockery) or in a pot. Responds well to regular applications of magnesium rich fertiliser

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.

NVS CODE

PIMSUT

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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-suteri/>

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