

Pimelea telura

COMMON NAME

Three Kings pimelea

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2008)

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea telura C.J.Burrows

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, OL

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR, Sp

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small shrub to 1m tall with erect white-hairy branches bearing pairs of green fleshy poking out leaves, hairy white flowers and white fruit inhabiting the Three Kings Islands. Leaves 8-14mm long by 3-6mm, cupped, leaves underneath flowers larger. Flowers with both male and female parts.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Three Kings Islands (Manawa Tawhi (Great Island));

HABITAT

On Basalt cliffs, rubble slopes and deeply weather basaltic soils. Usually in sparsely vegetated sites or in low windswept scrub dominated by kahikatoa (*Leptospermum scoparium* var. *incanum*), *Hebe insularis*, taupata (*Coprosma repens*), *Disphyma australe* subsp. *australe*, and ferns.



South West Island, December 1995.
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South West Island, December 1995.
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrubs, to 1 × 1 m with thick, rather stiff stems, decumbent to suberect or erect. Branches stout, numerous, sympodial. Young branchlets densely covered with appressed, short, white, villous hair, older stems less hairy, pale brown maturing grey. Node buttresses short (0.2 mm), lunate, hidden by hair on young branchlets, prominent after leaf fall. Internode length 1.5–3 mm. Leaves decussate, crowded on young branchlets, on short, brown petioles (0.5–0.8 mm), ascendant, becoming patent or deflexed. Lamina glabrous, glaucous to yellow-green glaucescent, 8–14 × 3–6 mm, leathery, flat to slightly adaxially concave, to cymbiform, ovate to narrow ovate or broad elliptic to narrow elliptic, acute to slightly acuminate (but blunt-pointed), base cuneate. Stomata only on adaxial side. Inflorescences crowded, compact, 3–8-flowered. Involucral bracts 4, ovate to elliptic 8–12 × 4–5 mm. Receptacle very hairy. Plants bisexual. Flowers creamy white, on very short pedicels (0.3 mm). Outside of tube and calyx lobes densely covered with hair; inside hairless or sometimes with sparse hair; tube to 5 mm long, ovary portion 4 mm long, with vertical “stripes” of hair when dry, calyx lobes 3 × 2 mm. Anthers yellow. Ovary summit with dense short hair, extending two-thirds of the way to the base. Fruits ovoid, fleshy, creamy white (sometimes basally flushed pink), 6 × 3 mm. The hypanthium breaks off, irregularly, near the base as the fruits ripen. Seed broad-pyriform, with very thin crest, 3.5 × 2.0 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from all other New Zealand *Pimelea* by the larger size, robust growth habit, large, thick leaves, dense hair covering on branchlets, and bisexual, cream-coloured flowers with vertical “stripes” of hair on the ovary portion.

FLOWERING

October – July

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

FRUITING

October – July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Not known from cultivation. All past attempts to cultivate this species have eventually failed. Though easily grown from cuttings, and sometime seed, *P. telura* has proved fickle in cultivation and plants rarely persist for longer than one - two years.

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, range-restricted, often sparsely distributed island endemic under no obvious threats. At a few places, such as Bald Hill, Great Island, hybrids between *P. telura* and a member of the *P. urvilleana* complex have been found. This is one of the few places where the distribution of these two species overlaps on the Three Kings archipelago. Previously recorded as *Pimelea* aff. *tomentosa* (c) (AK 228145; Three Kings) in de Lange et al., 2004, Threatened and uncommon plants on New Zealand, *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

ETYMOLOGY

pimelea: *Pimeleoides* means “resembling *Pimelea*”, a genus in the family Thymelaeaceae (Greek, -oides = resembling, like).

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on: Burrows (2008).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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.

MORE INFORMATION

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