

Pimelea urvilleana subsp. urvilleana

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

Very low-growing sprawling shrub with densely white-hairy twigs bearing clustered pairs of thick blue-green leaves, hairy white flowers and white fruit inhabiting coastal areas south to Nelson. Leaves 3-6mm long by 2-3mm, underside shiny.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A small to medium-sized prostrate shrub; stems moderately stout but flexible, up to 300 mm long. Branching notably sympodial with some laterals. Branchlets densely covered by matted white hair. Internodes 1–3 mm long. Older stems slightly hairy, grey-brown. Node buttresses smooth, black, lunate, masked by hair on young stems. Leaves decussate but usually distichously arranged, ascendant on youngest branchlets, patent later. Lamina 3–6 × 2–3 mm, thick, narrow-elliptic to ovate, flat or slightly keeled. Tip usually obtuse. Stomata abundant adaxially, none or rare abaxially. Abaxial surface glistens. Inflorescences 5–7-flowered compact, receptacles very hairy. Involucral bracts 4, similar in size to adjacent leaves. Plants gynodioecious. Flowers small, white, outside very hairy, inside sparsely hairy in upper tube. Calyx lobes opening in salverform fashion or ascendant. Female tube 1.8 mm long, ovary portion wrinkled, 1.5 mm, calyx lobes 1.2 × 1 mm. hermaphrodite tube 3.8 mm long, ovary portion 2.5 mm, calyx lobes 2 × 1.5 mm. Anther dehiscence semi-latorse. Ovary with a tuft of long hair on summit. Fruits white, fleshy, opaque 5 × 3.5 mm. Seeds broad ovoid 3 × 1.8 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

See *Pimelea urvilleana* subsp. *nesica*. Description from: 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.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island: widespread, often common from Three Kings, throughout coastal Northland, thence mostly easterly south to the Wairarapa and south Taranaki. South Island: Tasman Bay (Astrolabe Passage), Marlborough Sounds.

HABITAT

Coastal. Rock outcrops, cliffs, sometimes in scrub.



Kaihoka, Golden Bay. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Little Bay, Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Date taken: 01/02/2011, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

See notes

GENUS

Pimelea

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea urvilleana A.Rich. subsp. *urvilleana*

SYNONYMS

Pimelea urvilliana A.Rich. subsp. *urvilliana* other. var.; *Pimelea urvilliana* A.Rich. orth. var.; *Pimelea prostrata* var. *urvilleana* (A. Rich.)

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Burrows (2009) offers a very clear (for the first time ever for this species) interpretation of *Pimelea urvilleana*, and as such splits it into two subspecies. Based on that interpretation he argues that *P. urvilleana* subsp. *urvilleana* is close to if not already extinct. However, it is stated that the genome survives in hybrids. No evidence is provided to back that claim up beyond empirical observations and some minor morphological assessments of herbarium material. Subsequent field work has shown that *Pimelea urvilleana* subsp. *urvilleana* is widespread, often common and not threatened. The distinctions offered for *Pimelea urvilleana* subsp. *nesica* seem dubious especially as specimens with characters of both subspecies can be found on the same plant.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Unknown. Burrows (2009) states: Summer

FRUITING

Unknown.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Probably easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and rooted pieces. As with other pimelea seed is probably difficult to germinate.

ETYMOLOGY

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

urvilleana: After D’Urville Island, which is named in honour of Jules Sébastien César Dumont d’Urville (23 May 1790 - 8 May 1842) - a French explorer, naval officer and rear admiral, who explored the south and western Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 36$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RF Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the “Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland” Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

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

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (17 October 2009). Description adapted from Burrows (2009).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-urvilleana-subsp-urvilleana/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026