

Pimelea declivis

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 2011)

FAMILY

Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY

Pimelea declivis C.J.Burrows

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Data Deficient

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low shrub to 50 cm tall with hairy twigs bearing pairs of narrow leaves that are slightly hairy underneath and on margin (lens needed), with slightly hairy white flowers and red fruit inhabiting limestone outcrops from south Marlborough to south Canterbury. Leaves 5–14 mm long by 2–3.5 mm wide.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (southeastern Marlborough, north and south Canterbury)

HABITAT

Lowland to lower montane, Mostly found in sparse grassland and grey scrub associated with limestone ridges, scarps, cliffs, outcrops, screes and boulder heaps. *Pimelea declivis* is also known sparingly from igneous rock.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect, suberect or decumbent, much-branched shrub up to 500 mm tall and 600 mm wide. Branching mainly sympodial. Young branchlets light brown, moderately densely covered in short, appressed hairs; internodes 2–3mm long, older stems brown to grey, some up to 300 mm diameter. Node buttresses lunate, not prominent on leafless stems. Leaves decussate, ascending, becoming patent, on short (0.3–0.5mm) often red petioles. Lamina 5.0–14 × 2.0–3.5 mm, medium glaucous-green, ovate or elliptic, flat or slightly keeled; tip acute, but blunt-pointed; base cuneate; abaxial surface with sparse hairs, mainly along margins and mid-vein, near tip; older leaves glabrous; stomata on both adaxial and abaxial leaf surfaces. Inflorescences terminal, 4–14-flowered; involucre bracts 4, usually broader than ordinary leaves (12 × 5 mm), not hiding the flowers. Receptacle covered with abundant short hair. Plants gynodioecious. Flowers white, scented, on short (0.8 mm) pedicels, densely hairy outside, inside sparsely hairy in tube and ovary portion. Female tube 3.5 mm long, ovary portion 3 mm, calyx lobes 2.0 × 1.6 mm; hermaphrodite tube 6 mm long, ovary portion 2.5 mm, calyx lobes 3 × 2 mm. Anther dehiscence introrse. Ovary wall thin, summit very hairy. Fruits ovoid, fleshy, red 5 × 3 mm. Seeds narrow-ovoid 2.8 × 1.5 mm, thin crest.



Waipara, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 17/05/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Pimelea oreophila* with which it sometimes grows by its usually erect, bushy habit and larger leaves, and from *P. cryptica* (which is endemic to the south Wellington coastline) by the typically stiffly erect branches, hairier leaves, and red fruit. *Pimelea declivis* is (as far as is known) an eastern South Island endemic, which is mostly confined to limestone outcrops, associated talus and soils.

FLOWERING

October–May

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. Probably easily grown from semi-hard and hardwood cuttings.

THREATS

Burrows (2011) outlines a range of threats, which include the past quarrying of limestone, competition from weeds (especially invasive shrubs such as broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*), farming, pine plantations (and the spread of wildling pines from these), and introgression with other *Pimelea*. Unfortunately none of these threats were quantified, and the species was not assessed using the New Zealand Threat Classification Manual (Townsend *et al.* 2008). Accordingly it was assessed in the 2012 Conservation Status assessment of vascular plants as 'Data Deficient' (de Lange *et al.* 2013). In the 2017 assessment, it was reassessed as 'Threatened – Nationally Critical' based on improved information about the population size (de Lange *et al.* 2018).

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 April 2011). Description adapted from Burrows (2011).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows CJ. 2011. Genus *Pimelea* (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 4. The taxonomic treatment of ten endemic abaxially hairy-leaved species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 49(1): 41–106.

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

