Pimelea sericeovillosa subsp. sericeovillosa

COMMON NAME
pimelea

FAMILY
Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY
Pimelea sericeovillosa Hook.f. subsp. sericeovillosa

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

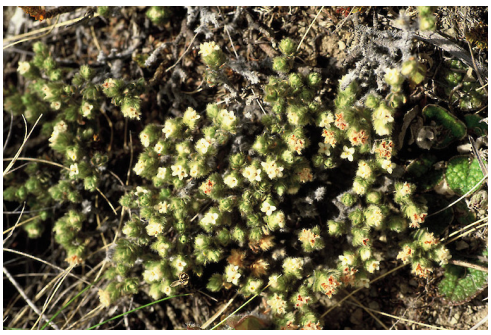
ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP
2009 | Data Deficient
2004 | Not Threatened



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BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Low growing sprawling shrub with hairy twigs bearing pairs of hairy leaves; hairy white flowers and orange fruit; inhabiting the northern South Island. Leaf dimensions not known, hairs curved, denser on underside.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island: Marlborough and North Canterbury.

HABITAT
Subalpine to alpine. Usually in open fell-field on mountain tops, ridge crests and in open stonefields. Occasionally found at lower levels in short short-tussock grassland.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A gynodioecious, low, much-branched, loose cushion-forming shrublet to 50 × 250 mm. with brown, clustered, appressed, leafy, densely villous young branchlets, and with older, gnarled, leafless stems often visible (these often leafless and glabrous, dark brown to black, often partly buried by windblown silt or sand). **Internode** length 0.3–0.6 mm. **Branching** mainly sympodial and radiating from a stout main stem up to 15 mm in diameter. **Node buttresses** lunate, dark brown, masked by hairs on young stems, not prominent on leafless branchlets. **Leaves** decussate, ascending, imbricate, sessile or with very short petioles (0.2 mm); lamina medium to pale green, elliptic to oblong, 2.2–4.0 × 1.0–1.3 mm, adaxially concave, mid-vein not evident, abaxial surface very densely covered with curled (sometimes straight), yellowish or dull-white, moderately long hairs; adaxial surface less densely hairy, sometimes glabrate (the youngest leaves have more or less dense adaxial vesture), obtuse, base cuneate, stomata on both adaxial and abaxial surfaces. **Inflorescences** terminal, with 1 or 2, sometimes 3, flowers. **Involucral bracts** 4, the same size as, or slightly wider than adjacent leaves (2.3 × 1.5 mm). **Receptacle** usually with abundant long hairs. **Flowers** 1–2 per inflorescence, white, on very short (0.1 mm) pedicels, very hairy outside, inside hairless; female tube 2.5 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 1.0–1.2 × 0.5 mm; hermaphrodite tube 3–4 mm long, ovary portion 2 mm, calyx lobes 1.5 × 0.8–1.0 mm. **Anther** dehiscence introrse. **Ovary** with dense short hairs on summit, less dense to half way down. **Fruits** ovoid, fleshy, pale orange 2.5–3.0 × 1.8–2.0 mm, seeds narrow-ovoid 2.0–2.2 × 1.0–1.3 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Pimelea sericeovillosa subsp. *sericeovillosa* is distinguished from the other two subspecies by its loosely and openly branched cushion-forming habit, dull-green colouration, leaf indumentum comprised of curled (rarely straight hairs), and by its restriction to Marlborough and North Canterbury, where it inhabits mountain tops (only occasionally extending down to valley floors).

FLOWERING

September–January

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

December–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings but difficult to maintain in cultivation. Prefers a moist free-draining soil, planted in full sun. Dislikes humidity, shade and poor drainage.

THREATS

Burrows (2011) rates the status of all three *Pimelea sericeovillosa* subspecies as “precarious to varying degrees”. However, no data is provided to show this, nor is the New Zealand Threat Classification system (NZTCS) (Townsend et al. 2008) used for his assessments; rather Burrows consistently confuses the NZTCS with listings provided by Hitchmough et al. (2007). Burrows (2011) also uses the ranking of Molloy et al. (2001), which is superseded by Townsend et al. (2008). *Pimelea sericevillosa* is declining (de Lange et al. 2018), although the causes of decline are not specified in the NZ Threat Classification System database (accessed December 2023). The paucity of flowering may be a factor.

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 (29 September 2011). Description adapted from Burrows (2011).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Burrows, C.J. 2011: Genus Pimelea (Thymelaeaceae) in New Zealand 5. The taxonomic treatment of five endemic species with both adaxial and abaxial leaf hair. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 49*: 367-412.

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pimelea-sericeovillosa-subsp-sericeovillosa/