Pimelea traversii subsp. traversii

COMMON NAME
Travers' pimelea

SYNONYMS
None

FAMILY
Thymelaeaceae

AUTHORITY
Pimelea traversii Hook.f. subsp. traversii

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 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

Dry River, Tresslick Basin. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

Pimelea traversii. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Bushy shrub to 60cm tall erect branches bearing pairs of fleshy oval leaves, hairy white and pink flowers and dry fruit inhabiting the eastern South Island. Leaves 3-6mm long by 2-4mm wide, leaves underneath flowers are larger. Fruit hairy, enclosing black seed.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Marlborough, Canterbury, and Central Otago).

HABITAT
In the drier parts of the eastern South Island where it is usually found on arenite or very rarely on limestone. A common species of montane to alpine regions where it grows on rock outcrops and stable stone fields, moraines, landslides, and sometimes in grey scrub or grassland

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A much-branched small to mediumsized shrub up to 600 mm tall. Branches erect and fastigiate; branchlets hairy at leaf axils and on receptacles, internodes glabrous or sometimes very sparsely hairy (in strips not covered by node buttress tissue). Node buttresses occupy the whole or most of the internode, medium to dark brown or black, usually prominent after leaf fall, stems aging grey-brown, grey or black. Internodes 1–4 mm long. Leaves decussate, ascending to patent, often closely imbricate, on very short petioles (0.2 mm) or sessile. Lamina medium olive green, sometimes red-margined, thick and coriaceous, broad elliptic to broad ovate, sometimes oblong or obovate, 3–6 × 2–4 mm, slightly keeled, concave above, obtuse, base angustate or cuneate. Margins thickened, slightly down-turned; midvein evident on under side, lateral veins obscure. Stomata evident only on under sides. Inflorescences many-flowered, pedicels 0.2 mm long, persistent. Involucral bracts 4, usually wider than the leaves (6–9 × 4–8 mm). Plants gynodioecious. Flowers hairy on outside; inside densely hairy in ovary portion and lower tube, sometimes sparsely hairy in upper tube; fragrant, white, sometimes pinkish with red lower tube. Calyx lobes open in salverform fashion. Female tube narrow to 6 mm long, ovary portion 1.0-1.5 mm, calyx lobes 1.0-2.0 × 1.3 mm. Staminodes short, at mouth of tube. Female tube to 9 mm long, ovary portion 3 mm, calyx lobes 4 × 2.2 mm; anther filaments inserted below mouth of tube; anthers yellow. Ovary with abundant hair at summit, less densely hairy to about half-way down. Fruits ovoid, green, drying brown, 4 mm long. Seeds ovoid, 3.5 × 1.6 mm. Dried hypanthia persistant and dispersing with fruits inside.

SIMILAR TAXA

Pimelea traversii subsp. boreus is confined to north-eastern Marlborough where it grows on limestone and other calcareous rocks. It differs from subsp. traversii by its taller size, larger leaves and by the presence of sparse hairs on the stem internodes. Pimelea traversii subsp. exedra is (at least so far) known from one site on the Livingston Range where it grows on ultramafic rocks. It differs from subsp. traversii by the smaller grow habit (up to 250 mm tall) and by having larger flowers. As some of these distinctions seem fairly arbitrary it is clear that further critical study of the range of variation in P. traversii using cytological and molecular techniques is needed.

FLOWERING

October – April

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

December - June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Fickle. Can be grown from cuttings, and occasionally seed germinates in garden conditions. Does best in full sun on a well drained soil. However, even well established plants are prone to sudden collapse.

ETYMOLOGY

pimelea: Pimeleoides means “resembling Pimelea”, a genus in the family Thymelaeaceae (Greek, -oides = resembling, like).
traversii: Named after William Thomas Locke Travers (1819-1903) who was an Irish lawyer, magistrate, politician, explorer, naturalist, photographer. He lived in New Zealand from 1849 and was a fellow of the Linnean Society.

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-traversii-subsp-traversii/