Pittosporum pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides

SYNONYMS
Pittosporum reflexum R.Cunn., Pittosporum pimeleoides var. reflexum (R.Cunn.) Hook.f., P. radicans R.Cunn. ex A.Cunn., P. gilliesianum Kirk, Pittosporum crenulatum Putt.

FAMILY
Pittosporaceae

AUTHORITY
Pittosporum pimeleoides A.Cunn. ex Putt. subsp. pimeleoides

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

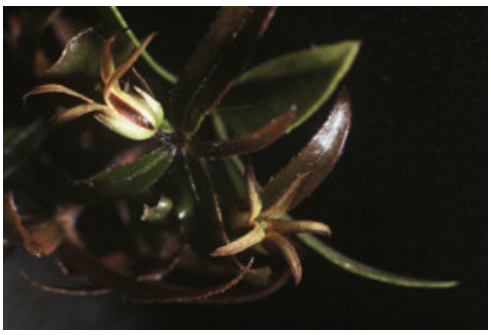
STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Sparse

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Rare much-branched shrub with whorls of narrow leaves and pale red-striped yellow flowers and 6-12mm long pointed capsules inhabiting lowland Northland. Twigs thin. Leaves 9-30mm long by 4.5-13mm wide. Fruit splitting into two to show the black sticky seeds in orange pith.



Kerikeri. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Opito Bay, Bay of Islands. December. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic, New Zealand, North Island, mainly in the east from Karikari Peninsula south to about Whangarei in the east and Waipoua Forest in the west.

HABITAT
Usually associated with kauri (Agathis australis) forest, often in secondary regrowth, along ridge lines and in shrublands caused by past fires, slips or other natural or human-induced disturbance mechanisms. Also found in coastal shrubland, or in gumland scrub. Very rarely it grows in riparian vegetation, in which case it occupies sites prone to frequent flooding.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spindly to much branched, erect to semi-erect, gynodioecious shrub 0.6-2.5 m tall. Trunk 1 or more arising from the ground, these and the branches typically rather slender, wiry, pliant, coloured brown; branchlets similar but at first densely clad in greyish-white to brown tomentum becoming glabrous with age. Leaves alternate, often in distinct whorls (semi-verticillate). Petioles up to 5 mm long, hairy. Lamina 5-50 x 3-5(-10), pale green, red-green or dark green above, paler beneath, linear-oblong, linear, oblanceolate or elliptic (very rarely broadly elliptic), apex acuminate or obtuse, base attenuate, margins entire or finely crenulate, surfaces sparsely hairy with ciliolate margins when young, becoming glabrous with age, coriaceous. Flowers usually terminal, 4-12 fascicled, female flowers often solitary. Pedicels 2-9 mm, filiform, puberulent, accrescent in fruit, subtended by a whorl of leaves and several 2-3 mm long, caducous, glabrous, ciliolate bud scales. Sepals 2.5-4 x 0.5-1 mm, linear, acuminate, glabrous. Petals 7-9 mm, yellow with a central or margin red stripe, rarely completely yellow or cream, linear, acuminate, fused in a tube to about the middle, then spreading and reflexed. Stamens 2.5-6.5 mm, anthers 0.5-2 mm. Ovary 1-2 x 1-1.5 mm, villous, style 1.5-3.5 mm, Stigma capitate, 2-lobed or truncate. Capsules 2-valved, 6-12 x 4-6 mm, green at first brown when mature, ovoid, acuminate, coriaceous, initially covered in long grey hairs otherwise glabrate. Mucilage yellow to dark orange. Seeds 5-18, glossy black, of irregular shape.

SIMILAR TAXA

The combination of the small erect to semi-erect shrub habit, narrow oblanceolate, linear-lanceolate to linear leaves and yellow and red-striped flowers are unique to this species (and subspecies). It could be confused with subsp. majus but that is an ultramafic endemic of the North Cape Peninsula with a trailing, decumbent, prostrate growth form, much broader elliptic leaves and longer sepals (4.5-5 cf 2.5-4 mm) and petals (7.5-9 cf. 11-11.5 mm).

FLOWERING

March - August

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Yellow

FRUITING

June - May (old fruit long persistent)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Extremely easy to cultivate. Semi-hardwood cuttings strike readily and fresh seed usually germinates within 3-6 months from sowing. This is an extremely attractive shrub with a long flowering period, and beautifully night-scented flowers. It does well in a range of soil types but is best sited in a semi-shaded situation in a free draining soil. P. pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides is a variable entity and some selection of the diversity of forms present in the wild would be worthwhile.

THREATS

A rather widespread but naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species. Once regarded as highly threatened it is now known to be secure at many sites. However, some coastal populations and also those growing within scrub or gumland have been lost to land development.

ETYMOLOGY

pittosporum: Pitch seed
pimeleoides: Like a pimelea

TAXONOMIC NOTES

At Whangaroa Harbour semi-erect forms of subsp. pimeleoides approach subsp. majus in that they often have broadly elliptic leaves.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 30 August 2006. Description adapted from Cooper (1956).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Cooper, R.C. 1956: The Australian and New Zealand species of Pittosporum. Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden 43: 87-188

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Pittosporum pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-pimeleoides-subsp-pimeleoides/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pittosporum-pimeleoides-subsp-pimeleoides/