



## *Pimelea actea*

### Common Name(s):

Pimelea

### Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Critical

### Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Wanganui – Manawatu – formerly at Turakina River Mouth and Foxton Beach; now known only from Himatangi Beach and possibly still at Castlecliff Beach), South Island, ( there is an historic gathering of this species from "Sand Flats near Christchurch")

### Habitat:

A species of sand country where it grows on sand flats and dune slacks periodically inundated with fresh to brackish water in winter–spring. It has also been collected growing in sand pockets on an old mudstone slump on sea cliffs

### Features\*:

Small, sparingly branched shrublets up to 500 mm tall. Branches erect to suberect, whip-like, often devoid of leaves for basal 2/3 of stem. Root system small and weak. Young branchlets sparsely hairy in leaf axils and on receptacle, sometimes with well-defined narrow bands of short hair along the full length of the internode; older stems hairless, initially purple-black fading to grey-brown. Node buttresses smooth, brown, and occupy the whole internode or forming hairless strips, sometimes prominent on leafless stems. Internode length less than or equal to 3.0 mm. Leaves decussate, ascendant, becoming patent, persistent, on short (0.5–0.8 mm) red petioles; lamina glabrous, pale green to glaucous-green, .03–5.5 × 1.2–3.5 mm, elliptic to slightly obovate, slightly adaxially concave, obtuse, base cuneate to truncate. Stomata evident only on upper surface. Inflorescences terminal on branchlets, loose, 3–11 flowered. Involucral bracts 4, broad elliptic to ovate (6 × 3 mm) partly hiding the flowers. Plants bisexual. Flowers white, on short pedicels (0.8 mm); tube and calyx lobes moderately hairy outside, inside glabrous, or rarely with sparse hair near the mouth; tube to 3 mm long, ovary portion 1 mm long, calyx lobes 1.3 × 1.0 mm. Anther filaments inserted at mouth of tube, Anthers yellow. Ovary with a few hairs at summit. Fruits globose, fleshy, translucent white, 5.0 × 4.5 mm. The hypanthium shedding irregularly, near the base as the fruits ripen. Seeds narrow-pyriform, with very thin crest 2.8 × 1.7 mm

### Flowering:

September - May

### Fruiting:

November - June

### Threats:

*Pimelea actea* as *Pimelea* (a) (CHR 495025; Turakina) was assessed as Nationally Critical by de Lange et al. (2004) and de Lange et al. (2009). The species remains seriously threatened and facing imminent extinction. The sole surviving natural population is known only from private land, is very small, subjected to frequent trampling by horses and other livestock, subject to weed invasion and at constant risk of being overwhelmed by sand. At Castlecliff, this species was known from very few plants at three sites, and recent surveys suggest it may now be extinct there.

### \*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 September 2008). Description adapted from 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* 45: 127-176.

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Heenan, P.B.; Courtney, S.P.; Molloy, B.P.J.; Ogle, C.C.; Rance, B.D.; Johnson, P.N.; Hitchmough, R. 2004: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Hitchmough, R.; Townsend, A.J. 2009: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand (2008 revision). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47: 61-96.

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=2373](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2373)



**Caption:** In fruit. Cultivated plant  
**Photographer:** John Barkla



**Caption:** Fruit. On cultivated plant  
**Photographer:** John Barkla