



Pimelea spicata

Conservation Status

Pimelea spicata is listed as an endangered species under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Species Description

An inconspicuous sub-shrub to 50cm tall with a diffuse, sprawling habit. The mature plants have a long underground taproot that allows this species to re-shoot after drought, fire and grazing.

Stems are hairless; leaves opposite to 20mm long and 8mm wide, often bluish-green. Flowers are white with a tinge of pink, tubular with four spreading lobes, arranged in heads becoming elongated with age. Flowers can appear at any time of the year usually after good rains. Fruit is a small green nut about 3 mm long; seed disperses up to 30cm away from the parent plant.

Habitat

Pimelea spicata is primarily found on the Cumberland Plain with an outlier population in the Illawarra. Council areas in western Sydney with populations of *Pimelea spicata* are: Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Bankstown, Holroyd, Blacktown, Penrith and Hawkesbury.

Occurs in Grey Box and Narrow-leaved Ironbark Woodland (e.g. Cumberland Plain Woodland and Moist Shale Woodland EEC's) and typically grows in groundcovers dominated by Kangaroo Grass or Weeping Grass.

Pimelea spicata with its underground taproot system can regenerate readily after disturbance and is often only visible once disturbance has been removed, for example, when no-mow zones are established in suitable habitat. Ongoing disturbance will weaken the population over time and plants less than six months are unlikely to survive.





Locations in Fairfield

There are only a few confirmed locations of *Pimelea spicata* in Fairfield with many older records on private land now developed. Known locations are at Horsley Park on a road verge, in the Western Sydney Parklands and in one council reserve at Prairiewood.

The road verge in Horsley Park (unformed road at this stage) is very weedy with only a few patches still dominated by native species and subject to garden dumping and encroachment by local residents. The council reserve population has recently appeared in a no-mow zone. An old record at Prout Park is yet to be confirmed. The areas in Western Sydney Parklands are protected.

References:

Department of Environment and Conservation (2005) *Pimelea spicata* R. Br. Recovery Plan. Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), Hurstville NSW.

OEH (2015) Spike Rice-flower profile accessed on Dec 2015 <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedSpeciesApp>

Harden G. J. (1990) *Pimelea spicata* R.Br. PlantNET National Herbarium of NSW, Royal Botanical Garden, Sydney, Australia.

James T (2015) Rare and Threatened Flora of Fairfield Local Government Area

James, T (2016) Native Flora on Shale Soils of the Cumberland Plain, western Sydney—An Identification Guide

Threats in Fairfield

In the Fairfield local area the greatest threat to this species has been clearing and fragmentation of Cumberland Plain Woodland. This has caused the extinction of local populations within developed areas. Known sites within Council maintained land are threatened by dumping, weed invasion and mowing.

Climate change with extended drought and high temperatures is also likely to affect populations and associated habitat. Genetic viability within the species is likely to be small due to few populations, their small size and the distance between populations.

Can you see the *Pimelea spicata* in the patch of *Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi* (Lavender Scallops) shown in the photo below?

