



Pimelea glauca



photo: M. Fagg

Pimelea glauca is much-branched perennial herb or small shrub to 1 m high [9, 10, 11], with a thick woody rootstock [6]. Its common name is Smooth Rice-Flower [11].

Population map:
www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

Pimelea glauca occurs in Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas and SA [9]. It is widespread and common in forests and grasslands [9, 13], as well as in open woodlands, mallee or sandhills [5]. In Tasmania it occurs in coastal vegetation and occasionally in dry places inland [12].

It grows on clay, loam, or sandy soils but it is not tolerant of high phosphorus levels [12].

Flowering and Seeds

P. glauca flowers mostly from spring through to summer and seed is collected 2-3 months after flowering, from October to February [11, 12, 13].

The seed releases very quickly once ripe, especially during hot weather. Slightly immature fruit may be harvested and allowed to mature in a warm position. Rub seeds against fine wire screens to remove the outer coverings [1, 8].

Cultivation and Uses

Pimelea species are difficult to grow from seed, so are usually grown from cuttings [1, 2, 13].

For successful germination, the dormancy of *Pimelea* seed may require breaking through temperature and moisture cycles in the field [1]. Smoke treatment has improved results for some *Pimelea* species, but not for *P. glauca*. The seed may respond to a combination of heat and smoke treatment.

For *Pimelea floribunda* (a WA species), baking seed in the sun for two summers, resulted in germination 20 days after watering in autumn, but there was only 5% seed viability [3]. Smoke and heat treatments have also been suggested but success is variable [12].

A few species may be easier to grow from seed and have shown good results without treatment (e.g. *P. serpyllifolia*) [7]. The Australian Seedbank Partnership is working

towards understanding the seed dormancy requirements of *Pimelea* species for restoration.

To propagate *P. glauca* from cuttings, use barely firm young growth without stripping back the young bark. The best months to take cuttings are February and March. Plants respond well to pruning, which will rejuvenate mature plants [12].

Pimelea species are attractive drought tolerant herbs with distinctive foliage and showy floral displays [11]. *P. glauca* grows best in moderately to well-drained sites in semi-shaded or sunny positions [12, 13]. It will tolerate extended dry periods [11, 12] and will cope with dry, exposed and windy sites as well as frost [14].

The flowers provide nectar for native butterflies and other insects [5].

This species is reported to be resistant to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* [12].

Avoid grazing stock where this plant is abundant because of the risk of poisoning [1, 4, 9, 13].



To source seeds or plants:
www.grassywoodlands.org.au

References

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[1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes*. Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.

[2] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.

[3] Fox, J., Dixon, B. and Monk, D. (1987). Appendix 6. Germination in other plant families. In: Langkamp P. (ed). *Germination of Australian Native Plant Seed*. Melbourne, Sydney: Inkata Press. Pp. 211-223.

[4] Harden, G. (ed.) (1990-1993). *Flora of New South Wales*. Volume 1, p. 381. Sydney, NSW: NSW University Press, Kensington.

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[6] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.

[7] Ralph, M. (1997). *Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Murray Ralph/Bushland Horticulture.

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[14] O'Neil, V. (1990). *Grow What Where*. Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd.

Internet links

[9] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&p&name=Pimelea-glauca>

[10] Botanic Gardens Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/Evolutionary_Ecology_Research/Ecology_of_Cumberland_Plain_Woodland/woodland_plants/pimelea_glauca

[11] Victorian Flora: <http://www.victorianflora.wmcn.org.au/plantDetail.php?plantno=278.00000#plantInfo>

[12] Tasmanian understorey network: <http://www.understorey-network.org.au/municipalities.html?species=Pimelea%20glauca>

[13] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>