

## Plant of the Month - February

by Allan Carr

### *Pimelea linifolia*

**Pronunciation:** pim-EEL-ee-a lin-if-OLE-ee-a

**Derivation:** *Pimelea*, from the Greek, *pimele* – fat, lard (refers to the oily seed); *linifolia*, leaves similar to those of the genus, *Linum* (flax).

### Rice Flower

THYMELAEACEAE



Leaves, flowers



Compact form on stony sand

*Pimelea* is an genus of about 108 species of which about 90 are endemic in Australia, including one species endemic on Lord Howe Island.

**Description:** *P. linifolia* is a variable small shrub, to about 1 m but usually smaller. On dunes and headlands it is a tiny compact plant to 150 mm. It is distributed from Cairns, Qld to south-eastern SA in a wide range of habitats from coastal to mountain regions. This extremely variable species has four subspecies. Caterpillars of the Yellow-spot Blue Butterfly (*Candalides xanthospilos*) feed on the flowers. The indigenous people of the Canberra area made string nets from the bark to catch Bogong Moths (*Agrotis infusa*).

**Leaves** to 30 mm by 5 mm are opposite, have a prominent mid-rib and a pointed apex.

**Flowers**, bisexual or female, in heads to 25 mm across are white and tubular with four spreading lobes of 2 to 5 mm long and conspicuous anthers showing in the photo on the left above. Usual flowering time is from August to January. Flowers can also be pink.

**Fruits** of 3 to 4 mm are green, contain one seed and are enclosed in the spent flower tubes.



Young plant



Pink form



*Pimelea linifolia* published in 'A specimen of the Botany of New Holland' by James Edward Smith, 1793