

Veronica stricta var. macroura

COMMON NAME

koromiko

SYNONYMS

Veronica macroura Hook.f. ex Benth. *Hebe macroura* (Benth.) Cockayne et Allan, *Veronica cookiana* Colenso, *Veronica macroura* var. *cookiana* (Colenso) Cheeseman, *Hebe cookiana* (Colenso) Cockayne et Allan, *Hebe stricta* var. *macroura* (Benth.) L.B.Moore

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica stricta var. *macroura* (Hook.f. ex Benth.) Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HEBSVM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing pairs of thin broad oval leaves inhabiting coastal sites in the central North Island. Leaves variable, to 106mm long, widest around middle and rapidly tapering towards tip and base. Leaf bud with no gap at base. Flowers white or pinkish, spike to 17cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Variable but as circumscribed here locally common in coastal situations from Cape Reinga to Wellington. An extreme form, with very large, broad, glaucous leaves, and a very flat almost creeping habit, and which has been segregated in the past as both *Veronica* or *Hebe cookiana* is endemic to the papa mudstone cliffs from Hicks Bay to Mahia Peninsula.

HABITAT

Strictly coastal where it usually grows on cliff faces and associated talus slopes.



Opape, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Opape, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub (0.2-)1 x 1(-2) m, sprawling to suberect or erect. Branchlets finely pubescent or entirely glabrous. Stem internodes longer than stem diameter. Leaf bud without sinus. Leaves, spreading, 50-100(-110) mm, dull green or glaucous (if so then somewhat glossy), obovate-oblong, somewhat leathery or fleshy, apex obtuse, leaf margin usually entire, occasionally toothed. Inflorescence axillary, racemose, about length of leaves but often much shorter, and then obscured by foliage, sometimes drooping, all parts pubescent or glabrescent. Flowers densely crowded on raceme, rather sweetly (sometimes over powerfully so) scented, white (rarely lilac). Calyx-lobes oblong, obtuse. Corolla tube 4-6 mm, exceeding calyx, narrow, cylindric, lobes rounded. Capsules < 5 mm long, glabrous, erect, suberect or drooping.

SIMILAR TAXA

Veronica stricta var. *macroura* differs from other accepted varieties of *V. stricta* primarily by the obovate-oblong leaves, and the generally smaller, compact, often sprawling, shrub habit. An exact circumscription for this variety is difficult, and in the relevant geographic parts of the country it grades into populations that have been called *Hebe stricta* var. *atkinsonii* (included here in *Veronica stricta* var. *stricta*) as well as *Veronica stricta* var. *stricta*, such that field distinction is well nigh impossible.

FLOWERING

(July-) August (-October) but flowering can also occur sporadically throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

(September-) November (-January) but seed capsules may be found throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and semi hardwood cuttings.

ETYMOLOGY

veronica: Named after Saint Veronica, who gave Jesus her veil to wipe his brow as he carried the cross through Jerusalem, perhaps because the common name of this plant is 'speedwell'. The name Veronica is often believed to derive from the Latin *vera* 'truth' and *iconica* 'image', but it is actually derived from the Macedonian name Berenice which means 'bearer of victory'.

stricta: From the Latin *strictus* 'upright, stiff'

macroura: From the Greek *macro* 'large' and *urus* 'tail', perhaps referring to the inflorescences.

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally cultivated, particularly the distinctive, glaucous leaved East Cape entity. Not often offered by commercial nurseries.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The form endemic to the marine siltstone/mudstone geologies of the eastern side of the North Island, and known by the names *Veronica cookiana* and *Hebe cookiana* seems very distinct from other forms currently included within var. *macroura*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 February 2005). Description based on Allan (1961) - see also Bayly & Kellow (2006)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I, Wellington, Government Printer

Bayly M. and Kellow A. 2006. *An Illustrated Guide to New Zealand Hebes*. Te Papa Press: Wellington

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-stricta-var-macroura/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-stricta-var-macroura/>