Veronica thomsonii

COMMON NAME
snow hebe

SYNONYMS
Pygmaea thomsonii Buchanan, Pygmea myosotoides Ashwin; Chionohebe myosotoides (Ashwin) B.G. Briggs and Ehrend.; Veronica myosotoides (Ashwin) Garn.-Jones, Chionohebe thomsonii (Buchanan) B.G.Briggs et Ehrend.

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica thomsonii (Buchanan) Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE
CHITHO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island: Canterbury, central and eastern Otago

HABITAT
Alpine and high alpine herbfield, fellfield and cushion field; among rocks, in crevices, on rocky outcrops, dry stony soil, rock tors and exposed ridges.

Old Man range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Pisa, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial, rigid (to loose) cushion with many erect branches and a woody base up to 7mm thick; 1–6mm high. Branches 6–78 × 1.9–5.5 mm, glabrous. Leaves spirally imbricate, rarely approaching loosely decussate, tightly (to loosely) appressed, becoming suberect near the branch tips, sessile, medium, dark, or olive green, becoming light green, light brown and/or purple near the base, widest at or above middle, 1.74–4.67 × 0.75–2.55mm, oblanceolate, narrowly obovate or obovate, with obtuse to subacute apex, entire with concave curvature. Leaf hairs eglandular and unicellular, 0.4–1.2mm long. Leaf inner surface with dense band of hairs near middle of leaf only, appressed and appearing to cover upper half, rest glabrous, rarely with isolated to sparsely distributed hairs arranged in a patch near the middle or densely distributed all the way to the apex. Leaf outer surface with isolated hairs, rarely with sparsely to densely distributed hairs on the upper ½ or near apex only, or glabrous. Leaf margins sparsely to densely ciliate bottom 2/3 of margin, upper 1/3 glabrous except for isolated tuft of hairs at apex, rarely ciliate for whole length of margin or lacking tuft at apex. Bracts 2, 2.07–5.19 × 0.44–1.08 mm wide at the widest part, very narrowly to narrowly elliptic, narrowly lanceolate to oblanceolate, or rarely narrowly ovate, with obtuse to subacute apex. Bract hairs eglandular and unicellular, 0.3–0.8 mm long. Bract inner surface glabrous, or rarely with isolated hairs near the apex. Bract outer surface with isolated hairs, or with sparsely or densely distributed hairs on upper half only, glabrous below. Bract margins sparsely to densely ciliate whole length or on upper ½ only, becoming glabrous lower half. Flowers solitary, sessile, axillary near branch tips. Calyx 1.95–4.21mm long, persistent around capsule. Calyx lobes divided equally up to ¾ to base, rarely only up to ½ or 2/3 to base, 1.56–2.76 × 0.38–0.96mm wide at the widest part, narrowly to very narrowly elliptic, narrowly lanceolate to lanceolate, or rarely oblanceolate, with obtuse to subacute apex. Calyx lobe hairs eglandular, unicellular, 0.3–0.8 mm long. Calyx lobe inner surface glabrous, or rarely with isolated hairs near apex, or rarely with sparsely distributed hairs on upper margins. Calyx lobe outer surface with sparsely to densely distributed hairs on the upper ½ up to upper 2/3 (rarely glabrous) becoming glabrous below. Calyx lobe margins sparsely to densely ciliate for whole length, rarely glabrous near apex or becoming glabrous below. Corolla white, 1.99–5.02 × 0.95–3.58mm, salver-form. Corolla tube longer than or equal to calyx, 1.94–3.50mm long, 0.51–1.62mm wide. Corolla lobes 0.95–1.77 × 0.65–1.43mm, spreading to erect, narrowly to broadly ovate, or obovate to very broadly obovate, with obtuse apex. Filaments 2, 0.22–0.47mm long. Anthers 0.43–1.22 × 0.40–0.87mm. Style 2.82–4.59mm long, exserted 1–2mm above corolla tube and anthers. Stigma 0.09–0.23 mm wide, capitate. Ovary 0.43–1.19 × 0.38–1.26mm wide, sparsely to densely hairy at apex, hairs 0.1–0.4mm long, or sometimes glabrous or with isolated hairs only. Nectary disc 0.16–0.42mm high. Capsule laterally compressed, bilobed, with septicidal and loculicidal dehiscence, 1.49–2.79 × 1.08–2.06 mm, 0.73–1.63mm thick, densely hairy at apex, or glabrous. Seeds up to 21 per capsule, 0.33–0.86 × 0.26–1.04 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other New Zealand cushion forming Veronica by the inner leaf surfaces which have a tight band of densely distributed appressed hairs near the middle of the leaf (this may at times be reduced to a tight patch of isolated to sparsely distributed appressed hairs), by the outer leaf surfaces sometimes densely hairy on upper portion, and by the leaf margins sparsely to densely ciliate on the lower 2/3 of the margin and glabrous above except for a tuft of hairs at the apex, or sometimes ciliate for the whole margin

FLOWERING

November - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

December - March

LIFE CYCLE

Seeds are dispersed by ballistic projection, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild. Requires specialised cultivation in an alpine house.

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'.
thomsonii: After Thomson

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange (5 October 2007): Description from Meudt (2006)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Meudt, H.M. 2008: Taxonomic revision of Australasian snow hebes (Veronica, Plantaginaceae). Australian Systematic Botany 21: 387–421. (as Veronica thomsonii)
Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11: 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-thomsonii/