

# Veronica albicans

## COMMON NAMES

hebe

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low bushy shrub with blue-green oval to long narrow pointed pairs of leaves and short spikes of white flowers inhabiting Northwestern Nelson. Twigs finely hairy. Leaves vary, to 42mm long and 16mm wide. Leaf bud with no gap at base. Flower spikes to 5cm long, on distinct stalk.

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Openly branched, spreading low or small bushy shrub to 1 m. tall. Branches decumbent or pendent or erect, old stems brown; branchlets green to red-brown, pubescent, hairs bifarious (sometimes restricted to tufts at nodes) or uniform; internodes (1.9-) 2.5-9 (-15.5) mm; leaf decurrencies evident or obscure. Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent. Leaves erecto-patent to recurved; lamina oblong or elliptic or ovate or lanceolate or linear-lanceolate, fleshy or coriaceous or subcoriaceous or thin, flat or concave, 11- 42 x 3.4-16.3 mm; apex obtuse to acute; base prominently amplexicaul to truncate or cuneate; 2 lateral secondary veins evident at base of fresh leaves; midrib slightly thickened below and depressed to grooved above; margin sometimes cartilaginous, glabrous; upper surface glaucous or glaucescent, dull, with many stomata, glabrous or hairy along midrib (near base); lower surface glaucous or glaucescent. Inflorescences with 15-45 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 1.7-5.1 cm, longer than or about equal to subtending leaves; peduncle 0.4-1.4 (-1.7) cm; rachis 0.7-3.9 cm. Bracts alternate, lanceolate or elliptic or ovate, acute or subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels (0.5-) 0.8- 2.5 (-3.5) mm. Calyx 1.5- 3 (-4) mm; lobes lanceolate or elliptic, acute to subacute. Corolla tube hairy inside or glabrous, (2.5-) 3-6 x 1.2-1.8 mm, cylindric, longer than calyx; lobes white at anthesis, ovate or elliptic (sometimes broadly), obtuse, suberect to recurved, shorter than corolla tube. Stamen filaments sometimes incurved at apex in bud, 3-5.5 mm; anthers magenta, 1.5-2.4 mm. Ovary ovoid (sometimes narrowly), rarely sparsely hairy, 0.8-1.2 mm; ovules 7-16 per locule; style 4.5- 9 mm. Capsules subacute or obtuse or slightly emarginate, 2.5-4.5 x 2-3.2 mm, rarely hairy, loculicidal split extending  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ -way to base. Seeds flattened (sometimes strongly), ellipsoid to discoid, brown, 1-1.8(-2) x 0.8-1.1 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.6 mm.



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



At Cobb valley, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island - Nelson, from Mt Burnett in the north to the Glasgow Range in the south, and as far east as the Bryant Range

## HABITAT

It grows in a range of habitats, usually on rocks (often calcareous), from just above sea-level (e.g. on the banks of the Aorere River) to subalpine and penalpine situations.

## GENUS

Veronica

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

Veronica albicans Petrie

## SYNONYMS

Hebe albicans (Petrie) Cockayne, Hebe recurva G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

An extremely variable species, distinguished from most others by the combination of glaucous leaves, conspicuously pedicellate flowers, short bracts, long corolla tubes, and glabrous ovaries and fruit. It includes plants previously placed in *H. recurva* (e.g. Moore, in Allan 1961) and *H. "glaucophylla* NW Nelson" (*sensu* Druce 1993). The species includes both sprawling, broad-leaved plants of subalpine areas, and erect, narrow-leaved plants of lowlands. *H. albicans* hybridises with *H. calcicola* (Bayly et al. 2001), and probably also with *H. salicifolia* (based on observations in the Cobb Valley).

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

(November) December-March (May)

## FRUITING

(January) February-August (November)

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## 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'.

**albicans:** From the Latin albicare 'to whiten', meaning whitening

## NVS CODE

VERALB

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40 or 80.

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Volume 1. Wellington: Government Printer.

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006 An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 168

Bayly, M. J., Garnock-Jones, P. J., Mitchell, K. A., Markham, K. R. & Brownsey, P. J. 2001: Description of *Hebe calcicola* (Scrophulariaceae), a new species from north-west Nelson, New Zealand, including details of Ravonoid chemistry. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 39: 55-67.

Druce, A. P. 1993: Indigenous vascular plants of New Zealand. 9th revision. Unpublished checklist held at Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand. [Copy also held in the library of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.]

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Bayly & Kellow (2006).

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-albicans/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026