

Veronica angustissima

COMMON NAMES

hebe

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low bushy shrub with long narrow pairs of leaves inhabiting riverbanks in the Opotiki and Otaki vicinities. Leaves widest towards base, to 75mm long by 9mm wide, with scattered minute hairs on margin (lens needed). Leaf bud with no gap at base. Flowers white in spikes to 11cm long

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Openly branched 1-1.4 m tall shrub of riverine banks, gorges, and cliff faces favouring sites prone to sudden flooding. Branches erect to ascending, brittle, brown to grey-brown; branchlets spindly, green, bifariously or uniformly puberulent; internodes 6-14 mm; leaf scars weakly evident. Leaf bud distinct without sinus. Leaves 22-75 x 3-9 mm, dull dark green to yellow-green, linear to linear-lanceolate, membranous, apex acute to subacute, margin puberulent. Inflorescence a lateral, unbranched raceme 47-110 mm long, bearing 29-100 flowers; peduncle 5-18 mm; rachis 41-980 mm. Bracts alternate, narrowly oblong, oblanceolate to deltoid, acute to obtuse. Flowers white or tinged mauve; pedicels 1.8-3.5 mm, longer than or equal to bracts, often recurved in fruit. Calyx 1.9-3.4 mm; lobes narrowly-oblong, lanceolate or elliptic, acute to obtuse, glabrous or hairy on the outer surface. Corolla tube 2.2-4 x 0.7-0.9 mm, white to mauve, cylindric and contracted at base, longer than calyx, internally densely hairy, externally not; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis, lanceolate, elliptic, obtuse or subacute, suberect to patent, equaling or longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments 4-4.5 mm; anthers 1.4-1.8 mm, mauve or magenta. Ovary 0.6-0.9 mm, narrowly ellipsoid; style 3.5-6 mm. Capsules 2.2-3 x 1.4-2.6 mm, pale brown to brown, obtuse or subacute. Seeds 0.8-1 x 0.6-0.8 mm, straw-yellow, flattened, more or less ellipsoid to discoid.

SIMILAR TAXA

Along with *Veronica rivalis* this is one of the few truly rheophytic hebes. It has traditionally been included within *Veronica stricta* from which it differs by its habitat preference, low, spindly shrub habit, flavonoid profile, typically narrower leaves (though similar narrow-leaved forms of *V. stricta* occur in Northland, near Mt Pirongia and the Waitewheta Valley in the Kaimai Range but these are arborescent in habit, and are tetraploid ($2n = 80$) rather than diploid ($2n = 40$) as in *V. angustissima*), and narrower racemes and flowers. From the Northland endemic *V. rivalis* it differs by its more southerly distribution, and by its flowers whose corolla tubes exceed their calyces.



Rheophyte, Motu River, Bay of Plenty.
Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken:
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Rheophyte, Motu River, Bay of Plenty.
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DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island where disjunct between Motu and Waioeka Rivers (East Cape Region) and the upper Otaki River (Taranui Range), and Takapu Stream (Tawa).

HABITAT

A rheophytic shrub of riverine habitats, especially rocky gorges where it invariably grows within or just above the floodline.

THREATS

A biologically sparse, naturally uncommon species with a patchy and highly disjunct distribution. It does not appear to have suffered any declines but it is often very uncommon over large stretches of apparently suitable habitat, and it has yet to be found between the East Cape and southerly Taranui Ranges.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica angustissima (Cockayne) Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS

Veronica salicifolia var. angustissima Cockayne; Hebe angustissima (Cockayne) Bayly et Kellow,

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

February - June

FRUITING

March - January

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and fresh seed. An attractive low bushy plant that responds well to regularly pruning and trimming to keep in shape. It does well in a sunny or semi-shaded site in most soils and, in cultivation may flower throughout the year.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

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'.

angustissima: From the Latin angustus 'narrow, constricted' and the superlative suffix -issimus, meaning 'very constricted, narrow'

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly, M.J.; Kellow, A.V. Hebes, identification, classification and biology. Wellington, Te Papa Press

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

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2006. Description based on Bayly & Kellow (2006).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

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