

Veronica arganthera

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing narrow pairs of leaves with a finely hairy margin (lens needed) inhabiting limestone bluffs in Fiordland. Leaves 15–30 mm long by 6–11 mm wide. Leaf bud with small narrow gap. Flowers white, in short spike to 5 cm long. Anthers pale.

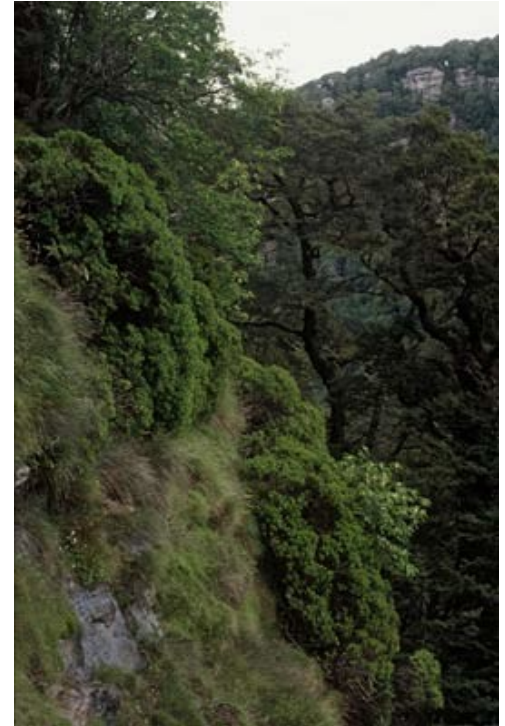
FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub, often rounded or spreading, to 0.5 m tall. **Branches** ascending to erect; old stems brown; youngest branchlets green; internodes 2–8 mm long, bifariously eglandular-pubescent. **Leaf bud** about as long as mature leaves, sinus narrow, acute. **Leaves:** lamina oblong to elliptic, coriaceous or subcoriaceous, m-shaped in transverse section, 12–38 × 5–11 mm; apex subacute and mucronate; base cuneate; midrib thickened beneath and depressed to grooved above; secondary veins not evident; margin entire, translucent, bevelled or rounded, minutely papillate or denticulate; upper surface green or yellowish green, dull, hairy along midrib; lower surface pale green, dull, glabrous. **Petiole** 3–4 mm long, uniformly eglandular-pubescent. **Inflorescences** with 15–25 flowers, lateral, racemose, simple or with 1–2 branches at base, 20–50 mm long, about = or > subtending leaves, flowers opening in acropetal sequence, usually all developing to maturity; peduncle 8–10 mm long, eglandular-pubescent; rachis 150 mm long, eglandular pubescent; bracts opposite and decussate at least below, sometimes becoming alternate above, subacute to acute, eglandular-ciliolate, linear to lanceolate; pedicels < bracts, eglandular-pubescent, erecto-patent at flowering and fruiting, 0.5–5.0 mm long.

Flowers hermaphrodite. **Calyx** terete, 4-lobed, equally divided, 2.5–3.5 mm long; lobes all similar, lanceolate to elliptic, obtuse, eglandular-ciliolate; margins scarious. **Corolla** white; tube glabrous, 1–2 mm long, c. 1 mm wide, cylindric, > calyx; lobes glabrous, > tube; posterior lobe circular to elliptic, obtuse, erecto-patent; lateral lobes elliptic or ovate, obtuse, erecto-patent, cuneate at base; anterior lobe ovate, obtuse, patent to recurved, not enfolding style; corolla throat white. **Stamens:** filaments white, 4–6 mm long; anthers white, c 1.5 mm long. **Nectarial disc** glabrous. **Ovary** ovoid, glabrous, 1.7–2.0 mm long, bilocular; style 5–7 mm long, glabrous, white; stigma capitate. **Capsules** acute, dark brown, 3–4 × 2.5–3.5 mm, glabrous; septicidal split extending to base, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{3}$ -way to base; capsule valves with pronounced midrib. **Seeds** 0.6–1.0 × 0.5–0.8 mm, straw yellow to pale brown.



Limestone Bluffs in Takahe Valley.

Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.



Fruits and foliage. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.

SIMILAR TAXA

Veronica arganthera resembles *V. cockayneana* from which it differs by its larger, dull green, concolorous leaves, short stem pubescence, very short eglandular hairs on leaf margins (glabrous or glandular-hairy in *V. cockayneana*), white anthers, and shorter capsules. *Veronica arganthera* is also similar to *V. subalpina*. However, *Veronica subalpina* has glossy leaves, lacks a sinus and has strictly simple (unbranched) inflorescence, spiralled flowers, magenta anthers, and larger seeds.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (eastern areas of Fiordland National Park).

HABITAT

A subalpine scrub developed on mostly south facing limestone bluffs, outcrops and cliff faces, in and around sink holes and on limestone talus and colluvium, usually at or near the tree limit.

THREATS

A narrow range limestone endemic that is known from very few sites and adult plants. It is vulnerable at many sites to deer browsing. Seedlings though common rarely reach maturity because of these browsing animals.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica arganthera (Garn.-Jones, Bayly, W.G.Lee et Rance) Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS

Hebe arganthera Garn.-Jones, Bayly, W.G.Lee et Rance

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December–May

FRUITING

January–August

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from cuttings. However, very slow growing and will not flower in lowland humid climates, where it prone to hebe leaf spot (*Septoria exotica*). Does best in a cool, semi-shaded, free draining situation.

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'.

NVS CODE

VERARG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Garnock-Jones PJ, Bayly MJ, Lee WG, Rance BD. 2000. *Hebe arganthera* (Scrophulariaceae), a new species from calcareous outcrops in Fiordland, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 38(3): 379–388.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2000.9512690>.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by Peter J. de Lange (18 August 2006). Description adapted from Garnock-Jones et al. (2000)

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

08 June 2026