

Veronica catarractae

COMMON NAMES

Fiordland parahebe

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White



Tutoko Valley, Fiordland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 15/02/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Tutoko Valley, Fiordland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 15/02/2012, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Subshrub, 50-500 mm tall. Old stems brown or red-brown. Branches ascending to erect. Branchlets brown or red-brown or green or purplish. Vegetative internodes 5-50 mm long. Stem pubescence bifarious, eglandular pubescent (antrorse, curved). Leaves decussate, erecto-patent to spreading. Lamina linear or lanceolate or oblanceolate or elliptic (rarely), 20-120 × 5-30 mm. Upper surface surface of leaves green, dull. Under surface of leaves whitish, dull. Leaf hairs numerous to dense, along midrib above (especially near base), uniseriate eglandular and glandular with short 1-celled stalk and small vertically divided head. Apex acute. Base cuneate. Margin glabrous, serrate. Marginal teeth or lobes in 5-25 pairs. Petiole 2-10 mm long. Inflorescence racemose, unbranched, 60-250 mm long at fruiting, with 12-40 flowers. Indumentum of peduncle, rachis, and pedicels moderately dense to very dense. Eglandular hairs of inflorescence antrorse, rust brown. Peduncle 3-100 mm long, eglandular-pubescent and glandular-pubescent; hairs in 1 row. Rachis 40-120 mm long, eglandular-pubescent and glandular-pubescent, hairs in 1 row above each bract. Bracts alternate, acute to acuminate, glabrous or ciliate with both glandular and eglandular hairs (rarely), linear. Bract margins entire. Pedicels suberect at anthesis, incurved at fruiting, 9-23 mm long, eglandular-pubescent or glandular-pubescent; hairs in 1 row (or rarely more-or-less uniform). Flowers: Calyx 4-lobed, 2.5-4.0 mm long. Calyx lobes lanceolate or ovate, acuminate (by folding). Calyx hairs on margins only, eglandular or mixed eglandular and glandular. Calyx lobe margins entire. Corolla white at anthesis. Nectar guides evident, present on posterior and lateral corolla lobes. Colour ring and nectar guides purple. Corolla throat yellow. Corolla 10-14 mm diameter. Corolla tube 1.0-1.5 mm long, 1 mm wide, hairy inside, hairs short. Corolla lobes glabrous. Posterior corolla lobe circular, obtuse, 5-7 × 4-6 mm. Lateral corolla lobes circular, obtuse, longitudinally folded around stamens, 5-7 × 5-7 mm. Anterior corolla lobe elliptic or rhomboid, obtuse, 5.0-6.0 × 2.5-3.5 mm. Stamen filaments white, 3-6 mm long, narrowed at base. Anthers magenta, when dry and dehisced 1 mm long. Nectarial disc ciliolate. Ovary ellipsoid, obtuse to emarginate, glabrous, 0.8-1.0 mm long. Style 4-6 mm long. Stigma 0.2 mm wide. Capsules weakly flattened emarginate, 3.5-5.0 × 3.5-5.0 mm, 1.5-2.0 mm thick, glabrous. Septicidal split of capsule extending to base. Loculicidal split of capsule extending $\frac{3}{4}$ way to base. Seeds strongly flattened, smooth-surfaced, broadly ellipsoid or discoid, pale brown, 0.8 × 0.7-0.8 mm

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Veronica lanceolata* from which it is readily distinguished by its greater overall dimensions, leaves which are green above and white beneath rather than the same colour on either side, and by the pedicel hairs which are aligned in one row

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Fiordland).

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Along river banks, where it is usually rooted in sand and silt, also in rock crevices, cliffs, and on recent landslide debris

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica catarractae G.Forst.

SYNONYMS

Parahebe catarractae (G.Forst.) W.R.B.Oliv., *Parahebe catarractae* (G.Forst.) W.R.B.Oliv. subsp. *catarractae*

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - January

FRUITING

November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings, rooted pieces and fresh seed. Popular in cultivation although it dislikes drought and humidity.

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'.

catarractae: Lover of the waterfall

NVS CODE

VERCAA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Garnock-Jones, P.J.; Lloyd, D.G. 2003: A taxonomic revision of *Parahebe* (Plantaginaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 181-232.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange (5 October 2006). Description adapted from Garnock-Jones and Lloyd (2003).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

08 June 2026