

Veronica haastii

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 growing shrub with erect twigs bearing pairs of small curved reddish green or green thick fleshy rounded notched leaves that hardly narrow to a broad leaf stalk that touch those of the opposing leaf inhabiting South Island mountains. Leaves to 12mm long.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low shrub to 0.2 m tall. Branches decumbent or ascending or spreading, old stems brown; branchlets purplish or green or brown, puberulent, hairs bifarious; internodes 2.5-7 (-10) mm; leaves not readily abscising, persisting on stem (usually) or decaying leaving basal parts attached. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves decussate, connate, erecto-patent to patent; lamina elliptic to obovate or ovate or spatulate (rarely, on lowermost leaves), coriaceous to fleshy, flat or concave, (6.6-) 8.2-13 x (4.2-) 5.5- 9.3 (-11.6) mm; apex rounded to subacute; midrib slightly thickened below, sometimes evident in fresh leaves (below); margin not cartilaginous, not thickened, glabrous, often tinged red, entire or shallowly to deeply toothed; upper surface green to dark green (sometimes tinged dark red), dull or glossy, with many stomata, glabrous; lower surface green to dark green (sometimes tinged dark red), dull or glossy. Inflorescences with 4-6 flowers per spike, (8-) 12-19 (-25) spikes per flowering head, terminal and lateral (arranged in a terminal flowering head), unbranched, (0.85-) 1.3-3.3 cm (total length of flowering head), spikes about equal to subtending leaves (flowering head longer than subtending leaves); peduncle 0-0.1 cm; rachis 0.2-0.3 cm. Bracts lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, connate, oblong to deltoid or lanceolate, acute to subacute or rarely obtuse. Flowers hermaphrodite or female (on different plants). Pedicels absent. Calyx 4-5 (-6) mm; lobes oblong or elliptic to lanceolate, subacute to obtuse. Corolla tube glabrous; tube of hermaphrodite flowers 4-5.5 (-6) x 1.8-2 mm, cylindric, shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, elliptic or ovate, subacute. suberect to patent, shorter than corolla tube. Stamen filaments remaining erect, 0.1-0.4 mm; anthers pink, 1.1-1.2 mm. Ovary rarely hairy, 1.5-2 mm; ovules 24-30 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 2-2.4 (-4) mm. Capsules subacute, 5-6 x 2.5-3.7 mm, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ -way to base. Seeds more or less flattened, more or less broad ellipsoid, straw-yellow, 0.9-1.3 x 0.6-0.9 mm, micropylar rim 0.1-0.2 mm



Mt Hutt. Photographer: Phil Garnock-Jones, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Craigieburn Range. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 14/12/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other "Connatae" by both flavonoid and morphological characters (Kellow et al. 2003); it is most similar to *V. macrocalyx* and *V. epacridea*. It is distinguished from the former by darker coloured, decussate leaves that are not narrowed into a petiole, shorter calyx lobes, and larger but more compact flowering heads. It is distinguished from the latter by larger, toothed and less rigid leaves, which are never keeled and do not have thickened margins, and by minutely ciliolate (rather than long-ciliate) calyx lobes.

DISTRIBUTION

South Island. Predominantly on mountains of Canterbury, from the Craigieburn Range to The Hunters Hills, with a disjunct, northernmost occurrence on Mount Terako, Marlborough.

HABITAT

Grows in open, alpine sites on rock debris and scree.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica haastii Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Hebe haastii (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan, *Leonohebe haastii* (Hook.f.) Heads, *Leonohebe haastii* (Hook.f.) Heads var. *haastii*

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December-January (-February)

FRUITING

January-April (-August)

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'.

haastii: Honours the New Zealand geologist and botanist Sir Julius von Haast (1822-87)

NVS CODE

VERHAA

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

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 120.

Kellow, A. V., Bayly, M. J., Mitchell, K. A., Markham, K. R. and Brownsey, P. J. 2003. A taxonomic revision of *Hebe* informal group "Connatae" (Plantaginaceae), based on morphology and flavonoid chemistry. New Zealand Journal of Botany 41: 613-35.

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-haastii/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026