Veronica insularis

COMMON NAMES
Three Kings koromiko

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Low growing shrub bearing pairs of oval leathery blueish leaves inhabiting the Three Kings Islands. Leaves to 33mm long by 14mm wide. Leaf bud sometimes with tiny gap between leaf pairs at base. Flowers white to purple, in branched sprays to 4cm long at the tips of twigs.

FLOWER COLOURS
Blue, White



Bald Hill, Great Island, December 1995. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dec 2006. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Spreading low shrub to 0.5(-1) m tall. Branches decumbent or erect or sometimes pendent, old stems brown; branchlets red-brown, densely pubescent, hairs uniform to bifarious; internodes (1-)4-10.5 mm; leaf decurrencies evident (usually with± faint ridges running along medial line and margins, with a shallow groove forming between the decurrencies of a leaf pair). Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent, or small and rounded to narrow and acute. Leaves erectopatent to patent (usually) or recurved; lamina elliptic (usually) or slightly obovate, coriaceous or fleshy, flat or slightly concave, 7.5-32.5 x 3.7-13.5 mm; apex subacute or obtuse; margin ciliolate or glabrous; upper surface green to dark green and often slightly glaucous or glaucescent, dull, with many stomata, glabrous (usually) or hairy along midrib; lower surface green, glabrous (usually) or hairy along midrib; petiole glabrous (usually) or hairy along margins or above. Inflorescences with 7-46 flowers, lateral, with 3 or more branches, 2.2-4 cm, longer than (usually) or about equal to subtending leaves (rarely); peduncle 0.7-1.7 cm; rachis 1.2-2.8 cm. Bracts opposite and decussate below and becoming alternate above, deltoid (sometimes narrowly) or ovate or lanceolate, obtuse to acute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels 0.5-5.5 mm. Calyx 2- 4 mm, with anterior lobes free for most of their length (mostly) or united 1/3-2/3-way to apex (degree of fusion of anterior lobes varies on one inflorescence); lobes lanceolate or ovate, obtuse to acute, eglandular ciliate (almost always) or with mixed eglandular and occasional glandular cilia. Corolla tube glabrous, 2.9-4 x 2.2-3 mm, funnelform and contracted at base, longer than calyx; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis (often almost purple when young), broadly ovate, obtuse, suberect to recurved, longer than or equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments 4.8 - 6.5 mm; anthers magenta, 1.8- 2.2 mm. Ovary approximately 0.9-1.1 mm; ovules 12-29 per locule, marginal on a flattened placenta (but usually recurved and appearing somewhat scattered), in 1- 3 layers; style 3.5-7.2 mm. Capsules subacute or obtuse, 2.5- 4.5 x 2-3 mm, septicidal split sometimes extending only ¾-way to base, loculicidal split extending ¼-½-way to base. Seeds flattened, ± ellipsoid, finely papillate, pale brown, 1- 1.2 x 0.6-0.8 mm, MR 0.2-0.3 mm.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic to the Three Kings Islands, northern New Zealand, where it is known from West, South West, Great and North East islands.

HABITAT
It grows on rock outcrops and cliffs, especially near the coast.

GENUS
Veronica

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica insularis (Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan

SYNONYMS
Hebe insularis (Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan

TAXONOMIC NOTES
A distinctive species recognised by the combination of: leathery, elliptic to obovate leaves, which are often ± glaucous or glaucescent; and branched inflorescences. The leaf bud sinus is either small or absent. Specimens show some variation in the degree of hairiness of leaves and branchlets. It is the only *Veronica* recorded from the Three Kings Islands.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November-December(-February)

FRUITING
December-March(-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'.
insularis: From the Latin insula 'island, pertaining to or growing on islands

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40 (+fragment)

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE
2004 | Range Restricted
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. 260
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-insularis/

PDF DATE
27 May 2026