Veronica maccaskillii

SYNONYMS
Veronica raoulii subsp. maccaskillii (Allan) Garn.-Jones; Hebe raoulii var. maccaskillii Allan, Parahebe raoulii subsp. maccaskillii (Allan) Heads, Heliohebe raoulii subsp. maccaskillii (Allan) Garn.-Jones; Heliohebe maccaskillii (Allan) D.A.Norton et Molloy

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica maccaskillii (Allan) Heenan

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR
2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Tight bushy shrub bearing pairs of small rounded leaves inhabiting north Canterbury limestone. Leaves 4-9mm long. Flowers pinkish, in clusters of 10-60.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand, South Island. Known only from North Canterbury in the vicinity of Waipara and Mt Cass.

HABITAT
A limestone endemic. Favouring cracked and jointed limestone outcrops, where it is usually found in semi-shaded situations.

FEATURES
Spreading, semi-divaricating shrub 50-300 mm tall. Branches prostrate to decumbent. Leaves erecto-patent to spreading, oblanceolate to obovate spatulate, 4-9(-15) x 2-5(-7) mm, apex obtuse to rounded, margin entire to crenate, with 0-2(-3) pairs of crenations. Upper leaf surface green to bronze-green, dull. Petiole 1-2(-3) mm long. Inflorescence 10-60-flowered. Calyx lobes 5. Corolla white or mauve at anthesis, in which case fading thereafter. Stamen filaments inserted at middle of corolla tube, 3-3.5 mm long. Nectarial disc glabrous to glandular-ciliate. Ovary glabrous or sparsely hairy. Style (4-)6-7 mm long, glabrous, sometimes sparsely hairy at the base. Stigma capitate. Capsule turgid, emarginate, sometimes appearing almost didymous. Seeds 1.2-1.6 x 0.6-0.7 mm.
SIMILAR TAXA
Allied to Veronica raoulii from which it differs by the denser, almost divaricating growth form, smaller, more rounded, barely toothed or entire leaves, and by the mauve to white corollas.

FLOWERING
October to November

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING
December to January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
May be grown from fresh seed and semi-hardwood cuttings. However can be difficult to maintain and dislikes humid climates. Probably does best in a well drained, sunny site, growing within a soil subtly enriched with base-rich minerals.

THREATS
Seriously threatened through habitat loss. This plant is a very narrow-range endemic, whose limestone bluff habitat is now largely surrounded by pasture. Many of the known locations are now either too dry, or suboptimal due to weed invasion from adjacent pasture. Recruitment failure is a problem at many sites.

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'.

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Heliohebe maccaskillii was proposed at species rank by Norton & Molloy (2009). Their decision was based on the syntopy of this species with Heliohebe raoulii and also by consistent morphological and ecological differences between both species. This view was accepted by Heenan (2012) when transferring this taxon over to Veronica at species rank

ATTRIBUTION

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

CITATION
Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Veronica maccaskillii Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-maccaskillii/ (Date website was queried)

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