Veronica macrocarpa var. latisepala

COMMON NAMES
hebe

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Bushy shrub bearing pairs of narrow leaves and spikes of small violet flowers inhabiting Great and Little Barrier Islands. Leaves to 163mm long. Leaf bud without gap at base. Flowers closely spaced, with long threads (anthers), in spikes around equal leaf length.

FLOWER COLOURS
Blue, Violet/Purple

Windy Canyon. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

Hebe macrocarpa var. latisepala close up of flowers, Ex Cult. Windy Canyon, Great Barrier Island, 16 September 2006. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub to 3 m tall. Branches erect, old stems brown or grey; branchlets green, pubescent or glabrous, hairs bifarious or uniform; internodes (2-) 5-41 mm; leaf decurrencies obscure or weakly evident (with a faint ridge along medial line). Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent. Leaves erecto-patent to recurved; lamina lanceolate or linear or oblong or oblanceolate or elliptic (often narrowly), coriaceous, m-shaped in transverse section, (23-) 45-110 (-163) x (5-) 9-22 (-32) mm; apex acute to obtuse or apiculate or sometimes acuminate; base cuneate or truncate; brochidodromous secondary veins sometimes evident in fresh leaves; margin narrowly cartilaginous, ciliolate or glabrous; upper surface green or dark green, usually glossy, without evident or rarely with few stomata, hairy along midrib (usually) or glabrous; lower surface light green. Juvenile leaves crenate, ciliolate (and with scattered hairs above midrib). Inflorescences with (13-) 25-85 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 3-13.2 cm, shorter than (almost always) subtending leaves; peduncle 0.6-1.9 (-3.6) cm; rachis (2-) 3-11.3 cm. Bracts alternate (apart from lowermost pair in most cases), lanceolate or deltoid (sometimes narrowly) or oblong, obtuse to acute or acuminate. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels 1.5-5.5 mm, sometimes recurved in fruit. Calyx (2-) 2.5-3.7 (-4.2) mm; lobes lanceolate or elliptic or ovate or deltoid, acute to obtuse, very rarely hairy outside. Corolla lube hairy inside, (2.2-) 3.2-5.5 x 2.8-4.2 mm, funnel form and contracted at base, at least slightly longer than calyx; lobes violet or tinged with pink or mauve at anthesis, violet with age, ovate or elliptic, obtuse, erect to patent (usually only posterior lobe patent), shorter to longer than corolla tube, sometimes ciliolate or hairy inside; corolla throat white or violet. Stamen filaments coloured, 5.5-12.2 mm; anthers mauve or pink or violet or yellow, 2.3-3 mm. Ovary very rarely hairy, 1-1.6 mm; ovules approximately 8-10 per locule; style 5-11.5 mm. Capsules acute or subacute, 3.8-10 x 3-6.5 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-½-way to base. Seeds flattened (sometimes strongly), broad ellipsoid to discoid, winged, more or less smooth, brown (sometimes pale), 1-2.5 (-3.2) x 0.9-1.7 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.6 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from most large-leaved “Occlusae” (see Bayly & Kellow 2006) by its: leathery leaves; large, broad flowers, with corolla tubes longer than calyces, and long filaments; and large fruit.
Generally, V. var. latisepala is distinguished from V. var. macrocarpa by having mauve or violet flowers, compared to the white flowers of the latter (see further notes below).
V. macrocarpa is possibly closely related to, and may grade into V. corriganii (see notes under that species). It probably hybridises with V. stricta var. stricta at a range of sites, and the name Hebe xaffinis probably applies to this hybrid combination.

DISTRIBUTION

North Island, from near Whangarei to near Kawhia, including islands of Hauraki Gulf and the Mercury Islands.

HABITAT

It occurs in coastal to upland areas, in scrub, at forest margins or in open areas in forest, and on rocky sites.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica macrocarpa var. latisepala (Kirk) Cheeseman

SYNONYMS

Veronica latisepala Kirk, Hebe macrocarpa var. latisepala (Kirk) Cockayne

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Moore (in Allan 1961) recognised three varieties of *V. macrocarpa*. One of these is treated by Bayly & Kellow (2006) as a distinct species, *V. punicea*. The other two, var. *macrocarpa* and var. *latisepala*, are probably worthy of recognition (and are treated by some authors, e.g. Druce 1980, 1993, as distinct species). It has not, however, been possible to delimit these varieties to an extent that they could each be mapped and described separately by Bayly & Kellow (2006), var. *macrocarpa*, as traditionally defined, has while flowers, 2n=80 chromosomes and occurs on the North Island mainland, including the Coromandel Peninsula. var. *latisepala*, as traditionally defined, has violet flowers, 2n=120 chromosomes and occurs on Great Barrier and Little Barrier islands, and possibly near Whangarei Harbour and on Coromandel Peninsula. The two varieties are difficult to discriminate, particularly using herbarium specimens because: they are variable in leaf shape and size; specimens do not always have flowers (and colour may not always be retained); and the true limits of the chromosome races are unknown. Their discrimination is further confused because the geographic and morphological boundaries are not as clear-cut as outlined by Moore (in Allan 1961). For example, white-flowered plants occur on Great Barrier Island (M. Bayly personal observation), some of which have 2n=80 chromosomes (de Lange & Murray 2002); plants with 2n=120 occur on Coromandel Peninsula (de Lange & Murray 2002) and the Hunua Ranges (Hair 1967), the former at least with white flowers; both white-flowered and violet-flowered plants with 2n=120 are sympatric with white-flowered plants with 2n = 80 on Bream Head; violet-flowered plants with 2n=120 are sympatric with white-flowered plants with 2n = 80 on Mount Manaia (P. J. de Lange pers. comm. 2005). The limits of the two varieties are worthy of further investigation. Included in Bayly & Kellow (2006) under *V. macrocarpa* are narrow-leaved plants from Great Barrier Island considered by Druce (1980, as H. “sp. (w)”; 1993, as *H.* “Great Barrier”) to constitute an undescribed species, and by de Lange & Murray (2002) possibly to be hybrids between *V. macrocarpa* and *V. pubescens* subsp. *rehuarum*. There are no clear grounds for either treating them as a distinct species or as hybrids.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

April-November (-January)

FRUITING

January-December (-January)

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’.
macrocarpa: Large fruit

NVS CODE

VERMVL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 120

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NStr, PF, TL Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer.
Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 202-204.
de Lange, P. J. and Murray, B. G. 2002. Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand Flora - 37. Miscellaneous families. New Zealand Journal of Botany 40: 1-23.
Druce, A. P. 1980. Trees, shrubs, and Lianes of New Zealand (including wild hybrids). Unpublished checklist held at Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand. (Copy also held in the library of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.)
Druce, A. P. 1993. Indigenous vascular plants of New Zealand. 9th revision. Unpublished checklist held at Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand. Copy also held in the library of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.
Hair, J.B. 1967. Contributions to a chromosome atlas of the New Zealand flora - 10 *Hebe* (Scrophulariaceae). New Zealand Journal of Botany5: 322-52.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Bayly & Kellow (2006).

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-macrocarpa-var-latisepala/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026