

# Veronica ochracea

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low growing shrub bearing orangeish erect narrow short scaly twigs inhabiting Northwest Nelson mountains. Twigs 1-2.7mm wide.

Leaves scale-like, smooth, merging with stem, closely packed, clasping stem, sometimes with a hairy margin (lens needed), tip rounded. Flowers white, in groups of 4-8 at tips of twigs.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 0.4 m tall, of whipcord form. Branches ascending or spreading (with numerous short and erect secondary branches arising from upper surface); internodes (0.4-) 1-2.7 (-3) mm; branchlets, including leaves, 1.4-3.4 mm wide; connate leaf bases usually hairy or sometimes glabrous; nodal joint usually obscure (but sometimes apparent in older leaves), exposed; leaves not readily abscising and fragments persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina not thickened near the apex; margin densely ciliate; lower surface dark green (and ochre-coloured at tips), veins not visible. glossy. Inflorescences with 4-8 flowers, terminal, unbranched, (0.2-) 0.3-0.85 cm. Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, broadly ovate, obtuse or subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Calyx 2-2.4 mm, with anterior lobes united to apex; lobes ovate (fused anterior lobe very broadly oblong-ovate), subacute (posterior) or obtuse (or slightly emarginate, anterior). Corolla tube hairy inside, 1.2-1.4 x 1.5-1.6 mm, funnellform, shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, obovate or elliptic, obtuse or subacute (posterior sometimes emarginate), suberect to recurved (with age), longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments straight or possibly slightly incurved at apex in bud, 2.8-3.5 mm; anthers pink to orange, 1.3-1.4 mm. Ovary globose, sometimes hairy, 0.6-0.7 mm, apex (in septum view) didymous; ovules 5-9 per locule, style 3-4.5 mm. Capsules obtuse or truncate or didymous, 1.7-2.6 x 1.7-2.5 mm, sometimes hairy, loculicidal split extending 1/3-3/4-way to base (mostly approximately 1/3). Seed characters not recorded.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other whipcord species by the combination of: usually fused anterior calyx lobes; lack of a conspicuous nodal joint, except sometimes on older leaves; leaves that are not obviously ribbed; and the overall ochre colour of fresh plants, a product of the colour of the leaf tips. It is probably most similar to the group of related species comprising *V. salicornioides*, *V. armstrongii* and *V. annulata*, with which it usually shares the first three of these features. It is geographically distinct from those species, and differs in overall coloration, the relative size, shape and arrangement of leaves, as well as in chromosome number, and ITS sequences (Wagstaff & Wardle 1999).

## DISTRIBUTION

South Island - Mountains of Western Nelson, from the Anatoki Range to Mount Owen, with a disjunct southern occurrence in the Paparoa Range.

## HABITAT

Grassland or shrubland, usually over limestone or marble rocks.

## GENUS

Veronica



Lake Peel (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica ochracea* (Ashwin) Garn.-Jones

## SYNONYMS

*Hebe ochracea* Ashwin, *Leonohebe ochracea* (Ashwin) Heads

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

(November-) January-February

## FRUITING

February-April

## 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'.

**ochracea:** Ochre-coloured

## NVS CODE

VEROCH

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 124

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

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. 104.

Wagstaff, S. J. and Wardle, P. 1999. Whipcord hebes - systematics, distribution, ecology and evolution. New Zealand Journal of Botany 37: 17-39.

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-ochracea/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026