

Veronica pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides

COMMON NAMES

hebe

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low growing blue-green shrub bearing pairs of small oval leaves on reddish stems inhabiting dry valleys in the South Island. Leaves 3.5-8.9mm long by 1.5-4.5mm wide. Leaf bud with small narrow gap between leaves at base. Flowers pinkish, in spikes with up to 12 flowers.

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Violet/Purple

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Usually very low-growing and spreading, sometimes mat-like up to approximately 30 cm tall. Branches prostrate or sprawling to decumbent, sometimes forming a dense mat. Branchlets brown or red-brown or black, glabrous or pubescent, hairs bifarious or uniform; internodes (0.5-)2-10(-14.5) mm; leaf decurrencies obscure. Leaf bud distinct, or tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves; sinus absent, or small and acute. Leaves narrowly elliptic to elliptic or ovate, lamina (2-)3.5-8.9(-12.1) x (0.7-) 1.5-4.5(-5.2) mm, usually glabrous, but sometimes with one or both surfaces covered in short eglandular hairs. Inflorescences with 4-12 flowers. Flowers blue or violet to mauve, fading to mauve after pollination. Calyces and bracts ciliolate or ciliate on the margins and, on hairy-leaved plants, covered in eglandular hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Veronica subsp. *faucicola* has generally been known to New Zealand botanists as *Veronica pimeleoides* var. *rupestris*; nomenclatural reasons for a change in name are outlined by Kellow et al. (2003). It is distinguished from *Veronica* subsp. *pimeleoides* by its height, its stouter, ascending to erect branches, its generally paler flowers, and by its habitat, growing exclusively on rocky outcrops or cliff faces, in river valleys and in gorges. Like *Veronica* subsp. *pimeleoides*, the presence of a leaf bud sinus, stem and ovary indumentum and leaf shape are all variable, and two chromosome numbers are recorded.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island on drier mountains east of the Main Divide, from the Inland Kaikoura Ranges to near Lake Wakatipu.

HABITAT

Mostly on terraces, slopes or embankments near lakes and rivers.

GENUS

Veronica



Hebe pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides.
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Hebe pimeleoides subsp. pimeleoides.
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FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica pimeleoides Hook.f. subsp. *pimeleoides*

SYNONYMS

Veronica pimeleoides var. *minor* Hook.f., *Hebe pimeleoides* var. *minor* (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan, *Hebe pimeleoides* (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan subsp. *pimeleoides*

TAXONOMIC NOTES

A distinctive but highly variable species, distinguished from other “Subcarnosae” by its leaf shape, habit and flower shape and colour. *P.* subsp. *pimeleoides* varies in stature, from small mat-forming plants to sprawling plants with long trailing stems. It also varies in leaf shape and size; internode length; inflorescence length; the indumentum of leaves, stems and ovaries; the presence/absence, or prominence, of a leaf bud sinus; leaf colour; and in chromosome number. These characters may vary both within and between populations, with some morphological traits varying on individual plants. Some traits may be related to environmental aspects of morphological variation are discussed by Kellow et al. (2003).

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December-March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for March 2018](#) for the full story.

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’.

pimeleoides: *Pimeleoides* means “resembling *Pimelea*”, a genus in the family Thymelaeaceae (Greek, -oides = resembling, like).

NVS CODE

VERPSP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40 or 80

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, RR, Sp Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the “Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025” Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006 An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pgs. 140-142
Kellow, A. V., Bayly, M. J., Mitchell, K. A., Markham, K. R. and Garnock-Jones, P. J. 2003 Variation in morphology and flavonoid chemistry in *Hebe pimeleoides* (Scrophulariaceae), including a revised subspecific classification. New Zealand Journal of Botany 41: 233-53.
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-pimeleoides-subsp-pimeleoides/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026