

Veronica quadrifaria



COMMON NAME

whipcord hebe

SYNONYMS

Mitrasacme cheesemanii Buchanan, *Hebe cheesemanii* (Buchanan)
Cockayne et Allan, *Leonohebe cheesemanii* (Buchanan) Heads

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica quadrifaria Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native



Grampian range, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons



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NVS CODE

LEOCHE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low-growing, green, leafless square twigs inhabiting eastern South Island mountains north of the Waitaki River. Leaves scale-like, triangular, overlapping, clasping stem, margin with pale hairs (lens needed). Flowers white, in clusters of 2-6 towards tips of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

South Island: Eastern mountains of the Main Divide, from Black Birch Range, Marlborough, to Kirkliston Range, south Canterbury.

HABITAT

Alpine rock outcrops and scree.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Subshrub to 0.3 m tall, of semiwhipcord form. Branches decumbent; internodes (0.15-) 0.2- 0.7 (-0.8) mm; branchlets, including leaves, (1.3-) 1.5-2.4 (-2.7) mm wide, square in transverse section (or almost so, especially older parts of branchlets, away from the apex); connate leaf bases glabrous; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina deltoid (often broadly so) or semi-circular (more rarely); apex obtuse to acute; venation not evident in fresh leaves; margin ciliate; lower surface light to dark green. Inflorescences with 2-6 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 0.3-0.5 (-0.75) cm; peduncle 0.1-0.35 cm; rachis hairy or glabrous. Bracts opposite and decussate, free (usually) or connate, deltoid (and lowermost often keeled beneath), obtuse. Flowers male or female (on different plants). Pedicels absent or if evident then always shorter than bracts, 0-0.5 mm, glabrous or hairy. Calyx 1.3-2.2 mm; lobes deltoid or ovate or oblong, obtuse, with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia (glandular cilia may not be apparent, stalk cell may be very short), rarely hairy outside. Corolla tube glabrous; tube of male flowers approximately 1-1.1 mm, shorter than calyx; tube of female flowers 0.5-1.2 x approximately 1 mm, contracted at base (and more or less expanded around middle), shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white or pink at anthesis, elliptic or ovate or rhomboid (and auriculate above contracted base), obtuse, suberect to recurved, longer than corolla tube, papillate inside. Stamen filaments remaining erect, 1.1-1.4 mm (female approximately 1.1 mm; male approximately 1.4 mm); anthers magenta, 1-1.1 mm; sterile anthers of female flowers magenta, approximately 0.5 mm. Nectarial disc glabrous or ciliate. Ovary ovoid or ellipsoid, 0.4-0.6 mm; ovules 4-5 per locule, in 2 vertical rows on placenta; style 1.5-2.2 mm; stigma usually larger in female flowers. Capsules angustiseptate, obtuse, 1.6-2.2 mm long, 1.3-2 mm thick, septicidal split extending 1/3 to all way to base, loculicidal split extending 1/2-3/4 way to base. Seeds weakly flattened to more or less trigonal, ellipsoid, brown, 1-1.2 x 0.5-0.7 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.3 mm. 211 = 42.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *V. tetrasticha*; presently the two species are differentiated by the profile of the transverse section of branchlets, cruciform in *V. tetrasticha*, square in *V. quadrifaria*. However branchlets vary between the two extremes and differences are not always clear-cut.

FLOWERING

December-January

FRUITING

December-February

LIFE CYCLE

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'.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Possibly intergrades with *V. tumida*, and differences from *V. tetrasticha* are not always clear-cut.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly, M.J. & Kellow, A.V. 2006: *An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes*. Wellington, Te Papa Press. 296 pp.
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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: Ward, M.D. (Year at time of access): *Veronica quadrifaria* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-quadrifaria/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-quadrifaria/>