Veronica rigidula var. sulcata

COMMON NAMES
hebe

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Low bushy shrub bearing pairs of oval leaves inhabiting ultramafic rocks in the Marlborough Sounds. Leaves variable, to 28.2mm long, longer than wide, more or less u-shaped in cross section. Leaf bud with narrow gap at base. Flowers white, on short stalks, in spikes or sprays to 3.2cm long.



Near Attempt Hill (type specimen), D'Urville Island. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/01/2001, Licence: All rights reserved.

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Low growing, openly branched, bushy shrub 0.3-0.6 m tall. Branches erect, old stems brown; branchlets green, pubescent, hairs bifarious; internodes 1.0-5.5. mm. Leaf bud distinct, weakly tetragonous in cross-section; sinus narrow and acute. Leaves erect to patent; elliptic or broadly elliptic, coriaceous, sulcate (m-shaped in cross-section), 9.4–28.2 × 3.2–8.7 mm, ratio of leaf length to width 2.5–3.5; apex acute or subacute; margin minutely papillate; upper surface green, dull or slightly glossy, glabrous or minutely hairy along midrib (especially toward base); lower surface glaucous or glaucescent; petiole 2.0-3.2 mm long, glabrous or minutely hairy along margins (especially on youngest leaves) and /or rarely hairy above. Inflorescences with 10-40 flowers, lateral, usually tripartite or rarely with more than 3 branches or unbranched, 14-32 mm long, > or < subtending leaves; peduncle 3-12 mm; rachis 7-28 mm. Bracts opposite and decussate, or opposite and decussate below and becoming alternate above, ovate or deltoid, obtuse or subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels < bracts, 0.3–2.0 mm long. Calyx 1.5-2.5 mm; lobes elliptic, oblong or ovate, obtuse or subacute, with mixed glandular/eglandular cilia or wholly eglandular. Corolla tube glabrous 2.5-4.0 × 1.7 mm, cylindric, > calyx; lobes white or pale mauve at anthesis, elliptic, ovate or oblong, obtuse rarely emarginate, suberect to recurved, < corolla tube. Stamen filaments 3-4 mm long; anthers buff or faintly tinged pink, 1.7-2.0 mm. Ovary 0.9-1.0 mm; style 5-7 mm. Capsules obtuse or subacute, 2.4-4.0 × 1.8-2.5 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-½ way to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid, discoid or irregular, brown to pale brown, 0.8-1.6 × 0.7-1.1 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA
Closely related to Veronica rigidula var. rigidula from which it differs by its weakly tetragonous leaf bud (in cross section); elliptic to broadly elliptic leaves which are distinctly m-shaped in cross-section; and also by the more distinctly pedicellate flowers.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (mainly D'Urville Island but also on Editor Hill and Lookout Peak in the Marlborough Sounds)

HABITAT
A plant of montane habitats where it grows in low scrub and other sparsely vegetated sites on rubble slopes, rock outcrops and in and around boulders along the melange of the mineralised zone leading from D'Urville Island south through the Marlborough Sounds to Mt Dun

THREATS
A range-restricted endemic which is known from only three main populations. At none of these it is very common. There are no obvious threats but the population of *V. rigidula* var. *sulcata* is so small that there would be a high risk of extinction if it experienced any harmful effects.

GENUS
Veronica

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica rigidula var. sulcata (Bayly et Kellow) Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS
Hebe rigidula var. sulcata Bayly et Kellow

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November – February

FRUITING
December – October

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from cuttings. Can be rather slow growing. An attractive shrub though rarely flowers as heavily as Veronica rigidula var. rigidula.

WHERE TO BUY
Not Commercially Available.

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'.
rigidula: Engraved
sulcata: From the Latin sulcus 'furrow', meaning grooved

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: RR, St
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Bayly, M.; Kellow, A. 2006: An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Te Papa Press, Wellington.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by Peter J. de Lange (1 August 2006). Description modified from: Bayley and Kellow (2006)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-rigidula-var-sulcata/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026