Veronica salicifolia

COMMON NAMES
koromiko

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Bushy shrub bearing pairs of narrow pointed leaves inhabiting the South and Stewart Islands. Leaves variable, to 132mm long, gradually tapering to narrow tip, margin often uneven and with fine hairs (lens needed). Leaf bud with very small gap between leaves at base. Flowers in spikes to 23cm long.

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Openly branched bushy shrub to 2.5 m tall. Branches erect, old stems brown or grey; branchlets green or orange, glabrous (often) or puberulent, hairs bifarious to uniform; internodes (1-) 6-18 (-34) mm; leaf decurrencies evident or obscure. Leaf bud distinct; sinus square to oblong. Leaves erecto-patent; lamina narrowly lanceolate or oblanceolate, coriaceous or subcoriaceous, shallowly m-shaped in transverse section, (34-) 60-106 (-132) x (6-) 11- 18 (-28) mm; apex acuminate; brochidodromous secondary veins evident in fresh leaves; margin cartilaginous, pubescent or ciliate, distantly denticulate or entire; upper surface green, dull, with few or many stomata, hairy along midrib; lower surface light green, glabrous or hairy along midrib or sometimes covered with minute glandular hairs; petiole (1-) 2-4 (-5) mm, hairy along margins and above and below. Inflorescences with 100-250 flowers, lateral, unbranched, (5-) 7-18 (-23) cm; peduncle (0.7-) 1.3-4.5 (-6) cm; rachis (3.5-) 5.5-17.5 cm. Bracts alternate, lanceolate or linear, acute or subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite (or possibly some male-sterile). Pedicels (0.7-) 1.3-3 (-4.7) mm, sometimes recurved in fruit. Calyx 1.5-3 mm lobes ovate or lanceolate, acute or subacute. Corolla tube hairy inside and often outside, 2.5-3.2 x 1.6-1.8 mm, contracted at base, longer than calyx; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis, lanceolate, acute to subacute, suberect or erect, longer than corolla tube, sometimes with a few hairs toward base on inner surface and/or ciliate (e.g. WELT 16280). Stamen filaments 5-8.5 mm; anthers mauve, 1.5-1.9 mm. Ovary 0.9-1.1 mm; ovules 14-19 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 4-6 mm. sometimes sparsely hairy. Capsules subacute or obtuse, 2.5-3.5 x 2.5-3 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-¾-way to base (most approximately 1/3). Seeds flattened, broad ellipsoid to discoid, straw-yellow. (0.6-) 0.7-1.1 x 0.6-0.9 mm, micropylar rim 0.1-0.2 mm.

Hebe salicifolia. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

Woodlaw Forest, western Southland (leaf detail). Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
The most common *Veronica* of lowland and montane areas of South Island distinguished from most others by the size of its leaves. Similar South Island species are *V. stricta*, from which it differs in the presence of a leaf bud sinus, and *V. phormiiphila* (see notes under that species). It hybridises with *V. elliptica, V. calcicola* (Bayly *et al.* 2001). probably *V. albicans* and *V. strictissima* (see notes under those species), and potentially other species with which it co-occurs.

DISTRIBUTION
Throughout the South Island (except for Marlborough Sounds) and Stewart Island, also on Auckland Island and in Chile. Naturalised in western Europe (Webb 1972).

HABITAT
Occurs from sea-level to close to the treeline, mostly in open sites, and in forest.

GENUS
Veronica

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica salicifolia G.Forst.

SYNONYMS
Veronica fonkii Phil., Veronica salicifolia var. communis Cockayne, Hebe salicifolia var. communis (Cockayne) Cockayne et Allan, Hebe salicifolia (G.Forst.) Pennell

TAXONOMIC NOTES
It is not known whether *V. salicifolia* occurs naturally on Auckland Island or was introduced there. Two confirmed specimens (WELT 11157, WELT 83266!) are from a single plant growing close to a ruined house site near Lindley Point (Johnson & Campbell 1975). A more recent specimen from the same general area, CHR 437295, “nr. Deas Head” W.R. Sykes ZS/87, 13 Feb. 1987, resembles *V. salicifolia*, but is not identified with certainty (in the size of the flowers and inflorescences, and in leaf margin pubescence, it resembles some *V. salicifolia* x *V. elliptica* hybrids).

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
(October-) December-June (-July)

FRUITING
(November-) January- June (-July)

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

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'.
salicifolia: From the Latin Salix 'willow' and -folia 'leaf', meaning 'willow-leaved'

NVS CODE

VERSAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened 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. 268 pp.
Johnson, P. N. and Campbell, D. J. 1975. Vascular plants of the Auckland Islands. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 13*: 665-720.
Webb, D. A. 1972. Hebe. In: Tutin, T. G., Heywood, V. H., Burgess, N. A., Moore, D. M., Valentine, D. H., Walters, S. M. and Webb, D. A., eds, Flora Europaea. Vol. 3, Diapensiaceae to Myoporaceae. London: Cambridge University Press. pp. 251-2.
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-salicifolia/

PDF DATE

27 May 2026