

# Veronica salicifolia

## COMMON NAME

koromiko

## SYNONYMS

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

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica salicifolia* G.Forst.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

HEBSAL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF 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.

## DISTRIBUTION

Throughout South Island (except for Marlborough Sounds) and Stewart Island, and 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.



*Hebe salicifolia*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



*Hebe salicifolia*. Photographer: John Barkla

## FEATURES

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  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -way to base (most approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$ ). 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.

## 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.

## FLOWERING

(October-) December-June (-July)

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## FRUITING

(November-) January- June (-July)

## 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'.

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

## 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).

## 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, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 268.
- 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

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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