

Veronica scutellata

COMMON NAMES

marsh speedwell

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Spreading perennial herb up to 30 cm tall with opposite narrow stalkless leaves and small (c.1 cm across) white flowers.

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Glabrous herb with upright stems c.5 to 20 cm in length. The leaves are sessile, entire or sparsely toothed 2-6 cm x 0.1-1.2 cm. The flowers are in racemes that are slender and spreading, alternating in opposite pairs of leaves. Flowers are small (6mm across), and whitish in colour with purple veins. Capsule 3-4.5 mm wide.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished by its alternate flower stalks, linear leaves and white flowers with purple veins.

DISTRIBUTION

Found locally in Thames, Waikato, Manawatu, Wairarapa, Canterbury, Dunedin and the West Coast.

HABITAT

Shallow water, swamps and margins of waterways.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica scutellata L.

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Summer to autumn

FRUITING

Autumn



Korowai-Torlesse Tussocklands Park, Canterbury. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 07/05/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Waimakariri Basin, ephemeral wetland. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 13/12/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

YEAR NATURALISED

1924

ORIGIN

Temperate Eurasia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Probably a soil seed contaminant or contaminant of ornamental pond plants.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely 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'.

NVS CODE

VERSCU

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson P.N., and Brooke P.A. 1989: *Wetland plants in New Zealand*. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319 pp.

Popay I. et al. 2010: *An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand*, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc. 416 pp.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

MORE INFORMATION

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

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25 May 2026