

# Veronica senex

## COMMON NAME

old man parahebe, bearded speedwell

## SYNONYMS

Parahebe senex Garn.-Jones

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

Veronica senex (Garn.-Jones) Garn.-Jones

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North-West Nelson local in the extreme western portion

## HABITAT

A basicole inhabiting limestone and calcareous sandstone cliffs and associated talus within lowland stream and river systems



Anatori limestone bluffs, Kahurangi National Park, NW Nelson. Photographer: Simon Walls



Anatori limestone bluffs, Kahurangi National Park, NW Nelson. Photographer: Simon Walls

## FEATURES

Subshrub, 350-500 mm tall. Stems grey (pale). Branches decumbent to ascending. Branchlets brown, black or purplish. Vegetative internodes 10-60 mm long. Stem bifariously or uniformly eglandular-pubescent, rarely almost glabrous. Leaves erecto-patent to spreading. Lamina lanceolate, oblanceolate, ovate or elliptic, 20-80 × 10-25 mm. Upper surface of leaves dull, green or dark green; lower surface dull, pale green, pinkish or whitish. Leaf hairs on both surfaces eglandular, numerous, sparse or rarely absent. Apex acute to subacute. Base cuneate. Margin pubescent, rarely glabrous, serrate. Marginal teeth or lobes in 3-13 pairs. Petiole 3-7 mm long. Inflorescence racemose 10-20-flowered, unbranched, 100-250 mm long at fruiting. Indumentum of peduncle, rachis, and pedicels sparse to moderately dense. Eglandular hairs of inflorescence patent, white or colourless. Peduncle 40-70 mm long, eglandular-pubescent. Rachis 70-100 mm long, eglandular-pubescent or rarely glabrous. Bracts alternate, lanceolate, subacute to acuminate, eglandular-hairy below and eglandular-hairy above (then at apex only). Bract margins entire. Pedicels 8-21 mm long, eglandular-pubescent. Flowers white at anthesis, colour ring magenta, nectar guides obscure or absent, confined to posterior corolla lobe if present, magenta, corolla throat yellow or greenish; calyx 4-lobed, 4-5 mm long, lobes glabrous, linear to lanceolate, acute, margins entire; calyx hairs on both surfaces, eglandular. Corolla 10-12 mm diameter; tube 1.0-2.0 × 1.0-1.5 mm wide, hairy inside, hairs short. Posterior corolla lobe circular, obtuse or emarginate, 5 × 5 mm. Lateral corolla lobes circular, obtuse, longitudinally folded around stamens, 4.5-5.0 × 6.0-6.5 mm. Anterior corolla lobe elliptic to oblong, obtuse, 4.0-5.0 × 3.0-3.5 mm. Stamen filaments white, 4 mm long. Anthers white, 1 mm long. Nectarial disc ciliate. Ovary ellipsoid, emarginate, eglandular hairy, 1.0-1.5 mm long. Style 3.0-4.5 mm long. Capsules weakly flattened, truncate to emarginate, 2.0-4.0 × 2.5-3.5 mm, glabrous or hairy. Hairs eglandular, if present. Septicidal split of capsule extending to base. Loculicidal split of capsule extending 1/3-1/2-way to base. Seeds obovoid, pale brown, 0.5-0.8 × 0.6 mm

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Veronica senex* is most similar to *V. lanceolata* from which it is chiefly distinguished by its much larger size and robust growth habit, normally dull grey-green, elliptic rather than green, bronze-green, light green or dark green, glossy or dull, lanceolate to ovate leaves, which are usually finely eglandular-pubescent rather than glabrous, and by the calyces, ovary and capsules which are covered in short, straight, pale hairs rather than glabrous.

## FLOWERING

November - March (-July)

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## FRUITING

December - August

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings, rooted pieces and fresh seed. Dislikes humidity.

## THREATS

Listed as At Risk / Naturally Uncommon qualified 'RR' [Range Restricted] by de Lange et al. (2013) because it is known from only a few small populations in scattered sites along lowland river and stream systems. The overall population size is small but no obvious threats to this species are known.

## 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'.

## WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange (5 October 2006). Description adapted from Garnock-Jones and Lloyd (2003).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Rolfe, J.R.; Champion, P.D.; Courtney, S.P.; Heenan, P.B.; Barkla, J.W.; Cameron, E.K.; Norton, D.A.; Hitchmough, R.A. 2013: Conservation status of New Zealand Indigenous Vascular Plants. New Zealand Threat Classification Series 3. Wellington, Department of Conservation. 70p.

Garnock-Jones, P.J.; Lloyd, D.G. 2003: A taxonomic revision of *Parahebe* (Plantaginaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 181-232.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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