Veronica tairawhiti

COMMON NAMES
Wairoa koromiko

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Bushy shrub bearing pairs of thin very long narrow pointed leaves inhabiting the East Cape. Leaves to 150mm long by 11mm wide, widest towards base, with small knobs along margin (lens needed). Leaf base without bud at base. Flowers white, in spikes to 15cm long.



Hebe tairawhiti close up of flowering sprigg. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Heavily branched, bushy shrub or small tree up to 3 x 2 m. Branches erect, brown to grey-brown; branchlets green maturing red-brown to almost black, bifariously or uniformly puberulent or glabrous; internodes 7-15 mm; leaf scars evident to obscure. Leaf bud distinct, without sinus. Leaves 45-150 x 5-11 mm, upper surface green with broad yellow midrib, undersides paler, linear, linear-lanceolate to lanceolate (tapering evenly from broad base), firmly fleshy, flat of m-shaped in cross-section, recurved, apex acute, base abruptly cuneate, secondary veins, faint by evident in young leaves; leaf margin puberulent, entire or with a few distant teeth. Inflorescence a lateral, unbranched raceme 68-150 mm long, bearing 120-180 flowers; peduncle 6-23 mm; rachis 55-140 mm. Bracts alternate, narrowly deltoid, acute; outside hairy. Flowers white with pedicels 1.3-2 mm long, usually shorter than bracts. Calyx 2-2.5 mm; lobes lanceolate, acute, occasionally with exposed surface hairy. Corolla tube 3-3.5 x 1.5-1.8 mm, inner surface hairy, expanded in lower half, longer than calyx; lobes white or pale mauve at anthesis, elliptic, oblong, to obtuse, mostly erect or suberect to patent, shorter than corolla tube. Stamen filaments 3-5 mm; anthers 2-2.3 mm, mauve or violet. Ovary 1-1.2 mm, ovoid to ellipsoid; style 3.5-4 mm. Capsules 2.7-5.2 x 1.8-2.6 mm, pale brown, subacute. Seeds 0.8-1.2 x 0.5-1 mm, straw-yellow to brown, flattened, ellipsoid, obovoid or discoid.



May 2007. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Perhaps most similar to Veronica stricta var. egmontiana from which it differs by its easterly distribution, taller habit, and rather more narrowly lanceolate to linear leaves, which taper from a broad base. From Veronica parviflora it differs by the stamen filaments which are straight in bud, and longer wider leaves with hariy margins, and from V. angustissima chiefly by its preference for coastal habitats, and greater stature.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island, East Cape Region (from the upper Motu River east), Gisborne, Wairoa (northern Hawke's Bay) south to Mahia Peninsula.

HABITAT
Primarily a coastal shrub of low shrubland, often overlying calcareous mud or siltstones, or base-rich turbidite (flysch) sequences. Will tolerate some browsing pressure and as such may be seen invading pasture in some parts of its range.

THREATS
A widespread, naturally uncommon, biological sparse species of coastal to montane shrubland habitats. In some part sof its range it has declined to scrub clearance and the spread of weed species. However other populations seem to be stable, and some (such as those on the Mahia Peninsula) have even colonsied pasture.

GENUS
Veronica

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica tairawhiti (B.D.Clarkson et Garn.-Jones) Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS
Hebe tairawhiti B.D.Clarkson et Garn.-Jones

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
January - April

FRUITING
February - December

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and fresh seed. A very attractive shrub to small tree which does well in full sun with a damp root run. An excellent plant for screening parts of a lawn or garden. An ideal natural hedge which will respond well to some clipping.

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’.
tairawhiti: From the Maori name for the region where this plant is found

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 80

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Sparse
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
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

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2009). Description based on Bayly & Kellow (2006)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-tairawhiti/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026