

# Veronica tairawhiti

## COMMON NAME

Wairoa koromiko

## SYNONYMS

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

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

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

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 80

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

## BRIEF 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.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, East Cape Region (from the upper Motu River east), Gisborne, Wairoa (Northern Hawkes 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.



Hebe tairawhiti close up of flowering sprigg.  
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



May 2007. Photographer: Peter de Lange

## FEATURES

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, bifurcately 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 or m-shaped in cross-section, recurved, apex acute, base abruptly cuneate, secondary veins, faint but 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.

## 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 hairy margins, and from *V. angustissima* chiefly by its preference for coastal habitats, and greater stature.

## FLOWERING

January - April

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## FRUITING

February - December

## LIFE CYCLE

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.

## THREATS

A widespread, naturally uncommon, biological sparse species of coastal to montane shrubland habitats. In some part of 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 colonised pasture.

## 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

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## 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

**CITATION**

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**MORE INFORMATION**

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