Veronica treadwellii

COMMON NAMES
hebe

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Low growing bushy shrub to 30cm tall bearing pairs of oval dished leaves inhabiting wetter mountains of central South island. Leaves 13-29mm long by 5.5-12mm wide. Leaf bud without gap at base. Flowers white, in spike to 3cm long towards tip of twigs.

FLOWER COLOURS
White

In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/11/2003, Licence: CC BY.

Hebe treadwellii. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low shrub to 0.3 m tall. Branches decumbent or ascending, old stems dark brown or red-brown; branchlets green or red-brown, pubescent to puberulent or glabrous, hairs bifarious; internodes 1.5-10 (-11.5) mm; leaf decurrencies evident (sometimes weakly). Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent. Leaves decussate to somewhat subdistichous, erecto-patent; lamina elliptic to oblanceolate or obovate, subcoriaceous to fleshy, concave, (10.7-) 13-29 (-31.6) x (4.2-)S.5-I 2(-14.6) mm; apex subacute to obtuse; 2 lateral secondary veins sometimes evident at base of fresh leaves; midrib slightly depressed to grooved above; margin usually cartilaginous, glabrous; upper surface light to dark green, glossy, with many stomata (but these not always readily visible), glabrous or hairy along midrib; lower surface green or light green, dull or glossy. Inflorescences with (5-) 8-34 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 1.5-3.1 cm, about equal to or slightly longer than subtending leaves; peduncle 0.5-1.4 cm; rachis (0.7-) 0.9-2.2 cm. Bracts alternate (sometimes with lowermost pair more or less opposite), linear or lanceolate or ovate or oblong or deltoid, obtuse to acute. Flowers, hermaphrodite or female (on different plants). Pedicels 0-2.5 mm. Calyx 2.1-3.3 mm; lobes, oblong to lanceolate or deltoid, acute to subacute. Corolla tube glabrous; tube of hermaphrodite flower 1.9-3.5 x 1.3-2 mm, cylindric or funnelform and sometimes contracted at base, equalling or longer than calyx; tube of female flower 1.3-1.8 x 1.5-1.7 mm, contracted at base, shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, ovate (anterior sometimes narrowly) or elliptic or oblong-elliptic, obtuse (but sometimes appearing subacute because of margin in-rolling), suberect to patent, longer than or equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments 1.5-4.5 mm; anthers pink (sometimes pale) or cream; sterile anthers of female flowers yellow, 0.9-1.2 mm. Ovary conical to ovoid; ovules approximately 12-17 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 3.5-10.5 mm; stigma larger in female flowers. Capsules acute or obtuse, (2.5-)2.9-5 x 1.6-3 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-½-way to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid to discoid, not winged to only weakly winged, straw-yellow or pale brown, 0.9-1.5 x 0.8-1.1(-1.3) mm, micropylar rim 0.3-0.6 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Often confused with, *V. subalpina*. It is distinguished from this species primarily on the basis of habit, but also tends to have relatively broader, dish-like, obovate or oblanceolate to elliptic leaves, and sometimes longer corolla tubes. It also has a different flavonoid profile (Mitchell *et al.* 2007). Near the type locality, Sealy Range (Aoraki/Mt Cook area), and presumably at other locations where *V. treadwellii* and *V. subalpina* occur in close proximity, the two species are readily distinguishable in the field, on the basis of habit and leaf shape. Reliable identification of herbarium specimens is problematic, because of variation in leaf shape in both species, and because details of habit are often lost when plants are pressed. For this reason, the distribution of *V. treadwellii* may be underestimated.

DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of Nelson on Canterbury and Westland, on or west of the Main Divide, from Bald Knob Ridge to the Selbourne Range.

HABITAT

Grows in subalpine shrubland and penalpine grassland.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica treadwellii (Cockayne & Allan) Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS

Hebe brockiei G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson, Hebe treadwellii Cockayne et Allan

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING
December - February

FRUITING
(December-) February (-October)

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Placed *incertae sedis* by Moore (in Allan 1961), but generally recognised as a distinct species by subsequent authors (e.g. Wardle 1975; Druce 1980; Heads 1993; Wilson & Galloway 1993: Wilson 1996; Parsons *et al.* 1998).

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'.
treadwellii: Named in honour of Charles H Treadwell (1862-1936)

NVS CODE
VERTRE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPT, Sp, NR Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
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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
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ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by M. Ward from Bayly & Kellow (2006).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026