

Veronica truncatula

COMMON NAMES

hebe

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, RR

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing pairs of often curved narrow glossy leaves clustered towards tip of erect twigs inhabiting subalpine areas of the Kaweka and Ruahine Ranges. Leaves to 42mm long by 10.3mm wide, margin hairy (lens needed). Flowers white, in spikes to 8cm long towards tip of twigs.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub to 2 m tall. Branches erect, old stems brown; branchlets green, pubescent or puberulent, hairs uniform or bifarious; internodes 2-10 mm; leaf decurrencies evident. Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent. Leaves erecto-patent; lamina lanceolate or narrowly elliptic or narrowly oblong, coriaceous, slightly concave, (13-) 18-42 x (3.7-) 5.2-8.5 (-10.3) mm; apex truncate or slightly apiculate or subacute; midrib conspicuously depressed to grooved above and thickened below; margin ciliate or pubescent; upper surface dark green, glossy, without evident or with few stomata, hairy along midrib; lower surface light green. Inflorescences with 28-68 flowers. lateral, almost always unbranched but rarely (only seen on a cultivated specimen) tripartite, 3-7.5 cm, with all flowers (including those near the apex) generally developing to maturity (although sometimes with a few undeveloped flowers); peduncle 0.8-1.8 cm; rachis 2.4-6 cm. Bracts alternate, linear or deltoid or elliptic or oblanceolate, acute or obtuse. Flowers hermaphrodite or female (on different plants). Pedicels 0.8-1.8 mm. Calyx 2-3 mm; lobes lanceolate or elliptic, obtuse or subacute. Corolla tube hairy inside; tube of hermaphrodite flowers 2-3.2 x approximately 1.7-2.2 mm, funnelform or cylindric, slightly shorter to longer than calyx; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis, ovate or elliptic, obtuse, suberect to patent, longer than or equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments 4.5-5.5 mm; anthers purple, approximately 1.8-2.1 mm. Ovary approximately 1.2-1.5 mm; ovules 15-28 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 5-7 mm. Capsules obtuse or truncate to subacute, 3-4 x 2-3 mm, loculicidal split extending from ¼ to all the way to base (although often barely splitting at all). Seed characters not recorded.



Rangiwahia. Photographer: Phil Garnock-Jones, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Sunrise Hut, Ruahine Range. Photographer: Mike Lusk, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Generally, resembles *V. subalpina*, and Druce (1993), Wilson & Galloway (1993) and Brandon (1995) considered it should be recognised as a subspecies or variety of that species. However, it can be distinguished from *V. subalpina* by its hairy leaf margins, longer corolla tubes and by its flavonoid profile (Mitchell et al. 2007), and it is at least as distinct from *V. subalpina* as are some other species (e.g. *V. calcicola*). Because there is no compelling evidence that *V. subalpina* is necessarily its closest relative, *V. truncatula* is retained here as a distinct species. Differences from *V. evenosa*, which also occurs on North Island, are discussed under that species. *V. truncatula* differs from *V. calcicola*, which has similar glossy leaves with hairy leaf margins, by its glabrous ovaries and fruit, and longer corolla tubes.

DISTRIBUTION

Ruahine Range, from near Reporoa Bog to near Maharahara,

HABITAT

Grows in subalpine shrubland.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica truncatula Colenso

SYNONYMS

Hebe truncatula (Colenso) L.B.Moore

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(Nov-) January-February (-March)

FRUITING

April-May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

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'.

truncatula: From the Latin truncatus 'truncate, ending abruptly' and -ula a diminutive suffix, referring the leaf apex.

NVS CODE

VERTRU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 80

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 154.

Brandon, A. 1995. Species limits in the Hebe subalpina complex (Scrophulariaceae). Unpublished BSc. (Hons) thesis, Victoria University of Wellington. Wellington, New Zealand. (Copy held in the library of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.)

Druce, A. P. 1993. Indigenous vascular plants of New Zealand. 9th revision. Unpublished checklist held at Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand. Copy also held in the library of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.

Mitchell, K. A., Kellow, A. V., Bayly, M. J., Markham, K. R., Brownsey, P. J., & Garnock-Jones, P. J. 2007. Composition and distribution of leaf flavonoids in Hebe and Leonohebe (Plantaginaceae) in New Zealand—2. “Apertae”, “Occlusae”, and “Grandiflorae”. New Zealand Journal of Botany, 45(2), 329-392.

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

Wilson, H. D. and Galloway, T. 1993 Small-leaved Shrubs of New Zealand. Christchurch: Manuka Press.

ATTRIBUTION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026