

Veronica tumida

SYNONYMS

Hebe tumida (Kirk) Cockayne et Allan, *Leonohebe tumida* (Kirk) Heads

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica tumida Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

NVS CODE

LEOTUM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing green leafless knobbly twigs inhabiting northern Marlborough mountains. Leaves overlapping, scale-like, triangular, rounded, covering the stem, margin with pale hairs (lens needed). Flowers white, in clusters of 2-8 towards tips of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

South Island, Northern mountains including the Bryant, Richmond, Gordon, Travers, St Arnaud and Raglan ranges, as well as mountains between the Leatham and Waihopai rivers.

HABITAT

Alpine rock outcrops and sometimes on scree.



Mt Patriarch (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES

Sub-shrub to 0.2 m tall, of semiwhipcord form. Branches decumbent; internodes (0.5-) 0.8-2.6 (-3.4) mm; branchlets, including leaves, 1.3-2.5 (-3) mm wide, cruciform in transverse section; connate leaf bases glabrous; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina deltoid (shortly and often bluntly so); venation not evident in fresh leaves; margin ciliate; lower surface dark green, glossy or dull. Juvenile and reversion leaves entire, ciliate and pubescent (with eglandular hook-shaped hairs). Inflorescences with 2-8 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 0.2-0.9cm; peduncle 0.15-0.3 cm. Bracts opposite and decussate, apparently free, deltoid or oblong, obtuse. Flowers usually male or female (on different plants) (but some specimens are possibly hermaphrodite appearing to have pollen and fruit). Pedicels absent or if evident then always shorter than bracts, 0-1 mm, glabrous or hairy. Calyx approximately 2-2.5 mm; lobes oblong to slightly obovate, apex thickened and obtuse, with mixed gl. and eglandular cilia (glandular cilia may be obscure). Corolla tube, glabrous; tube, of male flowers 1.5-1.8 x approximately 1.5 mm, cylindrical or funnellform, shorter than or equalling calyx; tube of female flowers shorter than calyx; lobes white at anthesis (pink to mauve in bud), ovate or circular or broadly elliptic, obtuse, sub-erect to patent, equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments remaining erect, 1-1.2 mm; anthers purple, approximately 1.1-1.3 mm; sterile anthers of female flowers lighter purple. Ovary 0.5-0.7 mm; ovules 5-7 per locule, in 2 vertical rows on placenta; style 1-4 mm; stigma larger in female flowers. Capsules angustiseptate, 1.5-3.2 mm long, 1.3-2.7 mm thick, septicial split extending $\frac{1}{2}$ to all way to base, loculicidal split extending to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid 10 discoid, pale brown, 0.8-1.1 x 0.7-1.2 mm, micropylar rim 0.1-0.3 mm.

FLOWERING

November-February

FRUITING

January-April

LIFE CYCLE

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'.

tumida: From the Latin tumidus 'swollen'

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Distinguished from other semi-whipcords by tumidly swollen leaves that are convex on the outer surface.

In western and southern parts of its range it probably intergrades with *Veronica cheesemanii* sp. In the west some specimens from Bounds and Pinnacle resemble *Veronica cheesemanii* sp. in having leaves slightly more imbricate and less protruding/swollen than usual, making branchlets squarer in cross section. Specimens from nearby, on the Black Birch Range, are more extreme in these respects, and are assigned here to *Veronica cheesemanii* sp. These specimens, together with one from Crystal Peak, Crimea Range; (close to the southern geographic boundary between *Veronica tumida* and *Veronica cheesemanii* sp.), have leaves more protruding/swollen than typically seen in *Veronica cheesemanii* sp. (hence resembling *Veronica tumida*), but are included in that species on the basis of their branchlets, which are quite square in cross section.

Veronica tumida possibly also intergrades, or hybridises, with *Veronica hookerii* at some localities. Specimens from Mt Robert, Travers Range are particularly variable; some most closely match *Veronica tumida*, some match *Veronica hookerii*, and others are intermediate, with leaves that are shorter and plumper than generally found in *Veronica hookerii*, but both squarer at the apex and more oblong in their upper portion than usual in *Veronica tumida*. A sprig from a plant of this last kind is shown in Bayly & Kellow (2006).

ATTRIBUTION

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

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. 294.
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

MORE INFORMATION

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