

Veronica societatis

COMMON NAME

hebe

SYNONYMS

Hebe societatis Bayly et Kellow

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica societatis (Bayly et Kellow) Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing shrub sprawling through grass on Mt Murchison. Leaves blueish-green oval, dished, 9-24mm long by 4-8.5mm wide, overlapping. Leaf bud with small gap between base of leaves. Flowers white, in spikes to 4cm long towards tip of branches.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, to the summit of Mt Murchison., Braeburn Range.

HABITAT

A local component of low sub-alpine herb field dominated by carpet grass (*Chionochloa australis*). So far it has only been found on rather steep, north-east facing slopes



DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Decumbent subshrub to 300 mm tall. Branches decumbent or ascending and unbranched for (60-)110-240(-370) mm from apex; old stems brown, young green or red-brown. Internodes 2.8-9.7 mm long. Leaf bud about length of mature leaf, sinus broad, and acute. Petiole 1-2 mm. Leaves erect to erecto-patent; lamina elliptic to obovate (5-)9-24(-37) x (2-)4-8.5(-10) mm, glaucous, coriaceous, concave, apex obtuse to subacute, base cuneate. Inflorescences 10-25-flowered, lateral, racemose, unbranched, 15-35 mm long, overtopping subtending leaves. Flowers hermaphrodite. Peduncles 45-70 mm long, pubescent. Bracts with lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above. Pedicels shorter than bracts, suberect at fruiting. Calyx tapered, 2-3.5 mm, 4-lobed; lobes elliptic, subacute to obtuse. Tube 2-2.5 x 1.5 mm, white, funnelform. Corolla lobes elliptic to ovate or obtuse, white. Anthers purple. Capsules pale brown, 3.7-5 x 2.4-3.2 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from all other hebe species by the decumbent, sparsely branched habit (with ascending terminal branches), glaucous leaves, acute leaf sinus, shortly pedicellate flowers, bracts shorter than calyces, and corolla tubes that are equal to the calyces.

FLOWERING

Unknown - because of the species recent discovery (February 2000) and the fact that it occurs in a relatively remote location, flowering and fruiting times are not yet established

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

Unknown - because of the species recent discovery (February 2000) and the fact that it occurs in a relatively remote location, flowering and fruiting times are not yet established

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings. Fresh seed should germinate easily.

THREATS

Discovered in 2000. Known from just one site where there are 250 adult plants. Although not directly threatened, feral pigs have damaged and in some cases killed plants as they uproot the carpet grass in which this hebe grows. *Veronica societatis* meets the criteria of Nationally Critical because there are so few plants and because of the small area they occupy. It has yet to be found anywhere else.

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'.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2006. Description based on Bayly & Kellow (2006).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly, M.J.; Kellow, A.V. *Hebes, identification, classification and biology*. Wellington, Te Papa Press
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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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