

Veronica bishopiana

COMMON NAME

Waitakere rock koromiko

SYNONYMS

Veronica xbishopiana Petrie, *Hebe xbishopiana* (Petrie) Hatch, *Hebe bishopiana* (Petrie) Hatch

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica bishopiana Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing shrub bearing pairs of dark green (reddish when young) glossy narrow leaves inhabiting rocky sites in the Waitakere area. Twigs red. Leaves 40-90mm long by 13-18mm wide, widest towards base, blunt-tipped. Leaf bud without gap at base. Flowers white tinged pink, in a spike to 17cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island. Known only from the Waitakere Ranges, west of Auckland city, where it occurs from the upper Anawhata and Waitakere Stream south to Destruction Gully. This is the only vascular plant endemic to the Waitakere Ranges.

HABITAT

Stream sides, gorges, damp or partially shaded rock outcrops, often in or around seepages on cliff faces, or protruding from *Astelia banksii* A.Cunn. clumps at the apex of rock outcrops.



Mt Donald Maclean, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Donald Maclean, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Low spreading shrub up to 2 x 1 m (usually much less). Branches widely angled, spreading, often rooting at nodes. Old stems grey-black, branchlets maroon-black. Leaf bud without sinus, dark maroon in colour. Leaves lanceolate elliptic (20-)40-90 x (8-)13-18(-22) mm, maroon-green or dark-green, apex acute or acuminate. Inflorescences lateral, racemose 50-70(-110) mm long; flowers crowded. Calyx lobes ovate, subacute, overlapping at edges, 1.5-3 mm long. Corolla white tinged purple, tube 2-4 mm long, narrow, lobes suberect, ovate to lanceolate, acute 2-4 x 2-3 mm. Anthers purple, acute, 2.5 mm long, filaments purple, 6-8 mm long. Style purple, 6-8 mm long, ovary cylindrical, minutely puberulent. Capsule ovate, acute, dark maroon brown 3-4.5 x 2.5-4 mm, apex minutely puberulent.

SIMILAR TAXA

Sympatric with *Veronica macrocarpa*, *V. stricta*, and *V. obtusata*. From these species it can be distinguished by its low stature, maroon branchlets, dark-green, to maroon foliage, and often acuminate leaf apices. It is perhaps most similar to *H. obtusata* from which it differs by its much longer lanceolate, acuminate, dark-green to maroon tinged leaves, which lack hairy margins.

FLOWERING

March to August (sporadic flowering may occur throughout the year)

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

April to November

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown from fresh seed and semi hardwood cuttings. An excellent low shrub for a sunny place. Does best in a damp but free draining soil, though it is drought tolerant. A spectacular plant when planted on a rock wall. The maroon tinged dark green leaves are attractive on their own. However, this species has a long flowering period and is rarely without at least some flowers.

THREATS

A very localised species common in only a few stream catchments and rock outcrops of the Waitakere Range. At most sites it is threatened by the spread of pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) and Mexican daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus*). It was, until recently severely threatened by mistflower (*Ageratina riparia*) but the successful introduction of biocontrols for that weed four years ago has all but eliminated it as a threat. One very large roadside population was virtually destroyed by the careless application of weed killer by a weeds contractor for a local authority.

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'.

bishopiana: Named after John J. Bishop (1865-1933), who collected the type specimen.

NOTES ON ETYMOLOGY

John J. Bishop grew this plant in his garden and collected it jointly with H. Carse and E. Jenkins (de Lange 1996a).

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2004). Description based on de Lange (1996b) - see also Bayly & Kellow (2006).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Bayly M.; Kellow A. 2006: An Illustrated Guide to New Zealand Hebes. Te Papa Press: Wellington
- de Lange, P.J. 1996a: A brief background to J.J. Bishop (1865-1933). *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 51(2):63-65.
- de Lange, P.J. 1996b: *Hebe bishopiana* (Scrophulariaceae) - an endemic species of the Waitakere Ranges, west Auckland, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34: 187-194.
- 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-bishopiana/>