

Veronica ochracea

SYNONYMS

Hebe ochracea Ashwin, *Leonohebe ochracea* (Ashwin) Heads

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica ochracea (Ashwin) Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HEBOCH

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 124

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Spreading low growing shrub bearing orangeish erect narrow short scaly twigs inhabiting Northwest Nelson mountains. Twigs 1-2.7mm wide. Leaves scale-like, smooth, merging with stem, closely packed, clasping stem, sometimes with a hairy margin (lens needed), tip rounded. Flowers white, in groups of 4-8 at tips of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

South Island - Mountains of Western Nelson, from the Anatoki Range to Mount Owen, with a disjunct southern occurrence in the Paparoa Range.

HABITAT

Grassland or shrubland, usually over limestone or marble rocks.



Lake Peel (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 0.4 m tall, of whipcord form. Branches ascending or spreading (with numerous short and erect secondary branches arising from upper surface); internodes (0.4-) 1-2.7 (-3) mm; branchlets, including leaves, 1.4-3.4 mm wide; connate leaf bases usually hairy or sometimes glabrous; nodal joint usually obscure (but sometimes apparent in older leaves), exposed; leaves not readily abscising and fragments persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina not thickened near the apex; margin densely ciliate; lower surface dark green (and ochre-coloured at tips), veins not visible. glossy. Inflorescences with 4-8 flowers, terminal, unbranched, (0.2-) 0.3-0.85 cm. Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, broadly ovate, obtuse or subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Calyx 2-2.4 mm, with anterior lobes united to apex; lobes ovate (fused anterior lobe very broadly oblong-ovate), subacute (posterior) or obtuse (or slightly emarginate, anterior). Corolla tube hairy inside, 1.2-1.4 x 1.5-1.6 mm, funnellform, shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, obovate or elliptic, obtuse or subacute (posterior sometimes emarginate), suberect to recurved (with age), longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments straight or possibly slightly incurved at apex in bud, 2.8-3.5 mm; anthers pink to orange, 1.3-1.4 mm. Ovary globose, sometimes hairy, 0.6-0.7 mm, apex (in septum view) didymous; ovules 5-9 per locule, style 3-4.5 mm. Capsules obtuse or truncate or didymous, 1.7-2.6 x 1.7-2.5 mm, sometimes hairy, loculicidal split extending 1/3-3/4-way to base (mostly approximately 1/3). Seed characters not recorded.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other whipcord species by the combination of: usually fused anterior calyx lobes; lack of a conspicuous nodal joint, except sometimes on older leaves; leaves that are not obviously ribbed; and the overall ochre colour of fresh plants, a product of the colour of the leaf tips. It is probably most similar to the group of related species comprising *V. salicornioides*, *V. armstrongii* and *V. annulata*, with which it usually shares the first three of these features. It is geographically distinct from those species, and differs in overall coloration, the relative size, shape and arrangement of leaves, as well as in chromosome number, and ITS sequences (Wagstaff & Wardle 1999).

FLOWERING

(November-) January-February

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February-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'.

ochracea: Ochre-coloured

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. 104.
Wagstaff, S. J. and Wardle, P. 1999. Whipcord hebes - systematics, distribution, ecology and evolution. New Zealand Journal of Botany 37: 17-39.
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

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