

Veronica ligustrifolia

COMMON NAMES

hebe

SYNONYMS

Hebe ligustrifolia (A.Cunn.) Cockayne et Allan

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica ligustrifolia A.Cunn.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HEBLIG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy yellowish shrub bearing pairs of narrow leaves inhabiting eastern Northland. Young twigs and central vein of leaf yellow. Leaves variable, to 100mm long by 20mm wide, widest at base tapering to a narrow blunt tip. Flowers white to pinkish, in a spike to 8cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to Northland, North Island, from North Cape to Whangarei Heads, mostly on the eastern and northern coasts (between North Cape and Cape Reinga). It might also occur in western Northland (see notes below).

HABITAT

Grows chiefly in near-coastal sites in scrub, in forest, on cliffs or on slips.



Hebe ligustrifolia showing leaf bud and foliage, Ex Cult. (Waima Forest), 3 Sept 2006, Mt Albert, Auckland. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation (Wanganui) ex Te Pahi. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 16/01/2011, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Openly branched, usually a bushy shrub or spreading low shrub, rarely a small tree (near Te Pahi), to 2.5 (-8) m tall. Branches erect to spreading, old stems brown or grey; branchlets olive-green to more or less orange or sometimes purplish, minutely puberulent, hairs uniform; internodes (1.9-) 4-10 (-17.5) mm; leaf decurrencies evident (often with a narrow ridge along medial line) or obscure. Leaf bud distinct; sinus absent. Leaves erecto-patent to patent; lamina elliptic or oblong-elliptic or linear-lanceolate, subcoriaceous, flat or slightly m-shaped in traverse section, (12-) 26-50 (-100) x (4.2-) 6- 10 (-20) mm; apex subacute to obtuse; 2 lateral veins arising from base or brochidodromous secondary veins evident in fresh leaves; midrib thickened below and either slightly thickened above or depressed to grooved above; margin sometimes narrowly cartilaginous, puberulent or glabrous, rarely tinged red; upper surface light to dark green (with midrib and base of lamina often yellow), dull to slightly glossy, without evident stomata, usually minutely hairy along midrib or sometimes glabrous; lower surface light green, glabrous (mostly) or hairy along midrib (only toward base) or rarely covered with minute glandular hairs (on youngest leaves). Inflorescences with (15-) 20-70 flowers, lateral, unbranched, (2.5-) 3-8 cm; peduncle 0.45-1.5 (-2.2) cm; rachis 1.5-6.5 cm. Bracts alternate or lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, ovate or narrowly lanceolate, acute or subacute, rarely hairy outside. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels usually longer than or equal to bracts, 1-2.5 mm. Calyx (1.5-) 2-3 mm; lobes lanceolate or elliptic, acute or subacute or acuminate, sometimes hairy outside. Corolla tube hairy inside and sometimes outside, (1.2-) 1.6-3 x 1.8-2.2 mm, funnellform, shorter than (usually) or equalling or sometimes slightly longer than calyx; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis, ovate to deltoid or lanceolate or elliptic (last two states mostly in anterior lobes), acute or subacute, suberect to recurved, longer than corolla tube, bluntly ciliate (often) or with a few hairs toward base on inner surface and sometimes hairy outside. Stamen filaments white or mauve, 5-6.5 mm; anthers mauve or purple, (1.5-) 1.7- 2.5 mm. Ovary 0.75-1 mm; ovules approximately 6-15 per locule; style 4-6 mm. Capsules acute or subacute, 2.5-4 (-6) x 1.7-3 (-3.7) mm, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -way to base. Seeds flattened, broad ellipsoid to more or less discoid, straw-yellow, 0.9-1.5 x 0.7-1.1 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.4 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from most large-leaved "Occlusae" (see Bayley & Kellow 2006) by the combination of: leaf shape and size; having corolla tubes mostly shorter than calyces; and broad, acute, to subacute corolla lobes that are longer than the corolla tube. The leaves are generally less robust than those of *V. perbella* and broader than those of *V. rivularis* both of which have similar flowers. The outsides of calyces are frequently, though not always, glabrous; this can distinguish plants with only fruit or buds from *V. stricta* var. *stricta*, with which it may co-occur. It is probably most similar to *V. flavida* (see notes under that species); both often have midribs that are conspicuously yellow above.

FLOWERING

January-December

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

January-December

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'.

ligustrifolia: From the genus *Ligustrum* privet and the Greek word *phylum* 'leaf', meaning privet-leaved

TAXONOMIC NOTES

It is possible that *V. ligustrifolia* also occurs in western Northland, particularly around and south of Hokianga Harbour, including Waima (P. J. de Lange pers. comm. 2005) and Waipoua forests. Some similar specimens from that area are identified here as *V. flavida* (but see notes under that species). We have had few opportunities for fieldwork in these areas and cannot identify all herbarium specimens with confidence.

V. ligustrifolia is variable in habit (from sprawling to, more commonly, erect) and leaf size, and two informal segregates have been proposed: *Hebe* sp. "m" of Druce (1980) and Eagle (1982), also called *H. "Whangarei"* by Druce (1993); *H. aff. ligustrifolia* of de Lange & Murray (2002), databased at AK as *H. ligustrifolia* "var. Surville" and also listed, without an informal name, by Druce (1993). Neither is considered sufficiently distinct for recognition here.

A suite of specimens from Matai Bay, Karikari Peninsula (e.g. WELT 81894-81896), representing the only *Hebe* seen there, may have some affinity to *V. ligustrifolia*, but they are difficult to identify with any certainty. They have: long hairs on the branchlets, undersides of midribs, leaf margins and outsides of calyx lobes (all uncommon in *V. ligustrifolia*); corolla tubes slightly to conspicuously longer than calyces; and leaf flavonoids roughly intermediate between those of *V. stricta* var. *stricta* and *V. ligustrifolia* (Mitchell et al. in prep.).

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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