

Veronica macrantha var. brachyphylla

COMMON NAMES

hebe

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low erect shrub bearing pairs of fleshy notched oval leaves and conspicuous white flowers on short erect branches inhabiting northern South Island mountains. Leaves almost as wide as long, abruptly narrowing to leaf stalk and with 1-3 notches per side. Flowers white, in a cluster at tip of branches.

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White



Mt Richmond. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 26/01/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low shrub to 0.3 (-0.5) m tall. Branches erect or spreading or decumbent, old stems mottled grey; branchlets green or red-brown or brown, glabrous or puberulent (usually only on very youngest branchlets), hairs uniform or bifarious; internodes 1-14 mm; leaf decurrencies obscure to swollen. Leaf bud indistinct and tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves erecto-patent to patent; lamina broadly elliptic or spatulate or sub-circular, coriaceous, slightly concave or flat, 5.5-30.2 x 2.5-13.5 mm, ratio of lamina length/width (0.9-) 1.1-2.2 (-2.9), distance from leaf base (including petiole) to widest point (4.4-) 6-11 (-13.8) mm; apex subacute or obtuse; midrib not thickened, or depressed to grooved above and thickened below, sometimes evident in fresh leaves; margin glabrous or sparsely ciliolate, sometimes tinged red, deeply toothed, number of teeth on one side of leaf (0-) 1-4 (-5); upper surface green (sometimes tinged red near base), dull, with many stomata, glabrous or hairy along midrib; lower surface green, hairy along midrib (usually) or glabrous; petiole 0.5-5.4 mm. Inflorescences with 2-7 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 0.8-5.7 cm, with all flowers (including those near the apex) generally developing to maturity (but inflorescence usually terminated by a pair of empty bracts); peduncle (1.5-) 3-13 mm long; rachis 0.2-2.7 cm. Lowermost bracts on inflorescences 2-4 (-8) mm long, lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, narrowly deltoid or linear, obtuse (with a more or less squarish tip, often with a sunken apical gland). Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels shorter than bracts, (0.5-) 1-6 (-14.7) mm. Calyx 4.7-10.2 mm; lobes ovate or lanceolate, acuminate (with a more or less squarish tip, often with a sunken apical gland), glabrous outside (but hairy inside). Corolla tube glabrous, 4.5-5.3 x 2.5-4.5 mm (longer on anterior side), funnelform, shorter than calyx; lobes white at anthesis, ovate (often broadly), obtuse, patent to recurved, longer than corolla tube; corolla throat white or yellow. Stamen filaments thick and white, diverging slightly with age or remaining erect (and usually slightly incurved at the apex), 8-9.5 mm (varying from very shortly fused to the base of the corolla tube, to fused to the corolla tube for up to 2/3 its length); anthers creamy white or yellow, 2.6-3.5 mm. Ovary 1.6-2.5 mm; ovules 15-28 per locule, scattered on a hemispherical placenta; style 5.5-9.3 mm. Capsules angustiseptate, acute, 6.5-12.4 mm long, 4.5-6.5 mm thick, loculicidal split extending ¼-all way to base. Seeds flattened (sometimes strongly), discoid, winged, pale brown, 1.5-2.7 x 1.2-2.2 mm, micropylar rim 0.6-1 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species distinguished from other *Veronica* taxa by its large flowers, toothed leaves, indistinct leaf bud and laterally compressed capsules.

Compared to *V. macrantha* var. *macrantha*, *V. macrantha* var. *brachyphylla* has broadly elliptic leaves (not narrowly elliptic or oblanceolate); a lesser distance from leaf base (including petiole) to widest point; generally fewer number of teeth on one side of leaf; shorter lowermost bract on inflorescence (see each variants features for exact measures).

DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of South Island from the Anatoki Range, to the Hanmer Range. The varieties overlap in distribution at Lake Tennyson, southern Nelson, and possibly also (not verified by specimens) at localities between there and Lewis Pass.

HABITAT

It grows in penalpine grassland or low shrubland.

GENUS

Veronica

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica macrantha var. *brachyphylla* Cheeseman

SYNONYMS

Hebe macrantha var. *brachyphylla* (Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan, *Parahebe macrantha* var. *brachyphylla* (Cheeseman) Heads

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Morphological variation, and the taxonomic status of the two varieties, are discussed by Bayly *et al.* (2004). *V.* var. *macrantha* is more variable, particularly in leaf shape and size, than *V.* var. *brachyphylla*.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(November-) December-February (-April)

FRUITING

(December-) February-May (-November)

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'.

macrantha: Big flowered

NVS CODE

VERMVB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

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. 286.

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V., Ansell, R., Mitchell, K. and Markham, K. R. 2004. Geographic variation in *Hebe macrantha* (Plantaginaceae): morphology and Flavonoid chemistry. Tuhiinga, Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 15: 27-41.

ATTRIBUTION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-macrantha-var-brachyphylla/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026