

# Veronica masoniae

## COMMON NAMES

hebe

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

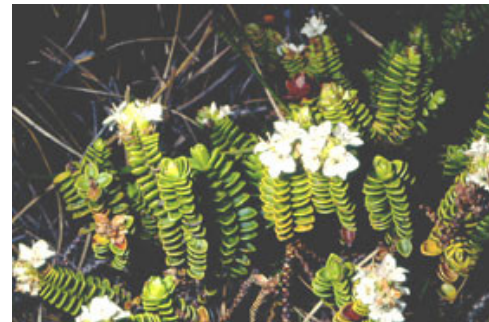
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low growing shrub with widely spaced erect twigs bearing pairs of small oval leaves that have a sharp shoulder where they join the leaf stalk inhabiting Northwest Nelson. Leaves 6-9mm long by 4-8mm wide. Flowers white or pinkish, in small clusters of 2-10 at tips of twigs.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White



Mt Peel, Nelson, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Hebe masoniae. Photographer: Sandra Wotherspoon, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 0.5 m tall. Branches decumbent or ascending or erect, old stems brown; branchlets green or red-brown, pubescent (hairs multicellular, more or less appressed, usually upward-facing), hairs bifarious; internodes (1-) 2-4 (-5) mm; leaf decurrencies extended for length of internode and often more or less swollen; leaves usually abscising above nodes with a small portion of lower part of petioles remaining attached to stem. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves; sinus broad and shield-shaped. Leaves appressed to patent; lamina oblong (often broadly) or elliptic or sub-circular, rigid, concave, (3-) 6-9 (-10) x 4-8 mm; apex obtuse; base truncate (often abruptly); midrib evident in fresh leaves (below), forming a thickened keel throughout the length of leaf; margin glabrous or ciliolate (with very short, stiff hairs) or ciliate; upper surface dark green, glossy, with many stomata, glabrous; lower surface dark green, glossy; petiole 1-1.5 (-2) mm, glabrous. Inflorescences with 2-10 (-14) flowers, terminal, unbranched, 0.8-1.8 cm; rachis glabrous or hairy (but not evident without removal of flowers and bracts). Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, large and almost obscuring calyx, elliptic or sub-circular, obtuse (usually) or subacute, margins hairy (cilia usually longer than those of *V. pauciramosa*). Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels absent. Calyx 5.5-7 mm; lobes lanceolate to elliptic, obtuse or subacute, usually eglandular ciliate or very rarely with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia. Corolla tube hairy inside, 4.5-6 x approximately 1.5-2 mm, cylindrical to funnelform, approximately equalling calyx; lobes white (usually) or tinged mauve at anthesis, ovate (often broadly) or elliptic, obtuse (posterior sometimes emarginate), suberect to recurved, longer to shorter than corolla tube, sometimes sparsely hairy inside. Stamen filaments 3-4.2 mm; anthers magenta, 1.8-2.6 mm. Ovary 1-1.4 mm, apex (in septum view) truncate or emarginate; ovules 8-14 per locule; style 7-9 mm. Capsules obtuse or subacute, 4-5 x c. 4 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-1/3-way to base. Seeds strongly flattened, broad ellipsoid or obovoid, weakly winged, pale brown, 1.5-2.1 x 1-1.4 mm, micropylar rim 0.3-0.5 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from similar species of “*Buxifoliatae*” (see Bayly & Kellow 2006) by the combination of: large ciliolate bracts that largely obscure the calyx; strictly terminal inflorescences; stomata on the upper leaf surface; leaves that are sharply keeled beneath (along the midrib) throughout their length; leaf buds that are closely surrounded by several imbricate leaf pairs; free anterior calyx lobes; and corolla lobes that are almost as broad as they are long.

## DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of western Nelson, South Island, from near Boulder Lake in the north to the Braeburn Range in the south.

## HABITAT

It grows in *Chionochloa australis* grassland, tussock grassland, or scrub, sometimes in wet sites.

## GENUS

*Veronica*

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica masoniae* (L.B.Moore) Garn.-Jones

## SYNONYMS

*Hebe pauciramosa* var. *masoniae* L.B.Moore, *Hebe masoniae* (L.B.Moore) Garn.-Jones, *Leonohebe masoniae* (L.B.Moore) Heads var. *masoniae*, *Leonohebe masoniae* var. *rotundata* Heads,

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

This was originally described by Moore (in Allan 1961) as a subspecies of *V. pauciramosa* but has been treated as a separate species for some time (e.g. by Heads 1987, 1992; Garnock-Jones 1993). Heads (1987), mostly on the basis of leaf shape and size, divided *V. masoniae* into two varieties with more or less overlapping distributions; these are not recognised by Bayly & Kellow (2006) as distinct.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

(October-) December-February (-April)

## FRUITING

January-May (-November)

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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'.

**masoniae:** Honours Ruth Mason (1913-90), former botanist at DSIR Botany Division (and co-worker of L. B. Moore), who recognised some of the distinguishing features of the species.

## NVS CODE

VERMAS

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 118

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. (1961). Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer.

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 220.

Garnock-Jones, P. J. 1993. Phylogeny of the *Hebe* complex (Scrophulariaceae: Veroniceae). Australian Systematic Botany 6: 457-79.

Heads, M. J. (1987). New names in New Zealand Scrophulariaceae. Otago Botanical Society Newsletter 5: 4-11.

Heads, M. J. (1992). Taxonomic notes on the *Hebe* complex (Scrophulariaceae) in the New Zealand mountains. Candollea 47: 583-95.

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

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026