

# Veronica propinqua

## COMMON NAMES

whipcord hebe

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low growing shrub bearing greenish erect narrow short scaly twigs inhabiting southern Otago mountains. Twigs 1.6-2.4mm wide. Leaves scale-like, smooth, clasping stem and with line where joins stem, short section of stem visible, tip rounded. Flowers white, in groups at hairy tips of twigs.

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 1 m tall, of whipcord form. Branches erect or ascending; internodes (0.8-) 1-2.8 mm; branchlets, including leaves, (1.3-) 1.6-2.4 mm wide; connate leaf bases hairy (usually), or glabrous; nodal joint distinct, exposed; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina not thickened near the apex; apex obtuse; midrib not thickened; margin, ciliolate to ciliate; lower surface green, veins not visible, dull or sometimes more or less glossy. Reversion leaves incised or crenate or entire, glabrous. Inflorescences terminal, unbranched, 0.3-0.9 cm; rachis densely hairy (with long, white, tangled hairs). Bracts opposite and decussate, connate (at least lowermost), broadly deltoid or ovate, obtuse. Flowers hermaphrodite. Calyx 1.5-2.5 mm, with anterior lobes free for most of their length or united to ¼-way to apex; lobes elliptic, obtuse. Corolla tube hairy inside, 1.5-2.1 x 1.5-2.1 mm, funnelform, equalling calyx; lobe, white at anthesis, elliptic (often broadly) to almost circular, obtuse, suberect to recurved, longer than or equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments 3.5-4.5 mm; anthers magenta. 0.9-1.6mm. Ovary 0.6-1.1 mm, apex (in septum view) didymous; ovules 11-24 per locule, marginal on a flattened placenta (possibly scattered when many ovules present), in 1-3 layers; style 2.7-5.8 mm. Capsules obtuse, (1.5-) 2.5-2.9 x (1.5-) 2.1-2.2 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-1/3-way to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid (sometimes broadly), more or less finely papillate, pale brown, 0.6-1 x 0.5-0.7 mm, micropylar rim 0.1-0.2 mm.



Hummock peak, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Hummock peak, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species, distinguished from other whipcords by the combination of: dark green, unribbed, closely appressed, rounded leaves; prominent nodal joints; internodes that are usually prominently exposed; and anterior calyx lobes that are free for most of their length. Plants differ greatly in stature, depending on growing conditions, from low open shrubs approximately 15 cm tall (e.g. places in the Rock and Pillar Range) to dense rounded bushes approximately 1 m high and 1 m wide. It sometimes occurs with, or close to, *V. annulata*, *V. hectorii* and *V. poppelwellii*.

## DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of Otago and Southland, South Island, in an area roughly bounded by Mount Ida in the northeast, Mount Maungatua in the southeast and the Mararoa Valley in the west.

## HABITAT

It grows in penalpine grassland and subalpine shrubland.

## GENUS

Veronica

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

Veronica propinqua Cheeseman

## SYNONYMS

Veronica cupressoides var. variabilis N.E.Br., Veronica propinqua var. major Cockayne ex Cheeseman, Hebe propinqua (Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan, Hebe propinqua var. major (Cockayne ex Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

(October-) January-February

## FRUITING

(December-) February-March

## 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'.

**propinqua:** From the Latin propinquus 'near, neighbouring', meaning closely related to another species

## NVS CODE

VERPRO

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, NStr, Sp, TL  
Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## 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. 98.

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-propinqua/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026