

Veronica pubescens subsp. pubescens

COMMON NAMES

Coromandel koromiko, hebe

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing pairs of narrow leaves that are hairy on the underside inhabiting open sites on the Coromandel Peninsula and offshore islands. Leaves to 87mm long by 18mm wide. Leaf buds with barely visible gap between leaves at base. Flowers white to pinkish, in spikes to 20cm long.

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe,
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In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe,
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub to 2 m tall. Branches erect or spreading; old stems brown to red-brown; youngest branchlets green to red; internodes 1–39 mm long; stem uniformly pubescent, hairs eglandular, varying from short to very long and woolly. Leaf bud about as long as mature leaves with leaves of a pair separating when mature; leaf bud sinus usually present (but absent in some populations or plants) small, rounded, square or oblong, usually hairy. Leaves lanceolate, oblong, elliptic or linear, subcoriaceous to coriaceous, upper surface dark to yellowish green, dull to somewhat glossy; underside paler, usually covered with long eglandular hairs, very rarely glabrous; ± flat, 15.0–87.0 × 3.5–18.0 mm; apex subacute or acute; base truncate or cuneate; midrib thickened beneath, hairy, with many hairs usually > 0.2 mm long; depressed to grooved above; margin pubescent, entire. Petiole 0.5–4.0 mm long, hairy. Inflorescences with 20–190 flowers, lateral, racemose and unbranched, 20–200 mm long, longer than or about equal to subtending leaves; peduncle 3–28 mm long, eglandular pubescent; rachis 17–175 mm long, eglandular-pubescent; bracts alternate, acute or subacute, ciliate, narrowly deltoid or lanceolate; pedicels much longer than, equal to or shorter than bracts, eglandular-pubescent, erecto-patent or slightly recurved at anthesis, erecto-patent, ascending or recurved at fruiting. Calyx 1.7–4.0 mm long, 4-lobed, equally divided; lobes all similar, deltoid or lanceolate, acute, acuminate or subacute, with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia, margins sometimes tinged pink. Corolla lobes mauve at anthesis (at least faintly) and white after pollination, outer surface eglandular hairy, corolla tube always white; tube hairy inside and often hairy outside, 1.9–3.9 × 1.3–1.9 mm, narrowly funnelform to shortly cylindrical and contracted at base, equaling or longer than calyx; usually hairy inside and sometimes hairy outside; lobe lanceolate or elliptic, subacute or obtuse, suberect to patent. Stamen filaments white, 4.5–6 mm long; anthers subacute to conspicuously apiculate, mauve or purple, 1.1–1.5 mm long. Nectarial disc glabrous. Ovary ovoid, 0.9–1.1 mm long, surface mostly eglandular hairy; style 3.5–10.5 mm long, white or mauve; stigma no wider than style, yellow, green, mauve or red at anthesis. Capsules obtuse or subacute, dark brown, 2.5–5.0 × 2.0–3.4 mm, septicial split extending to base, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ way to base.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other New Zealand *Veronica* by the lanceolate to oblong dark to yellow-green distinctly pubescent leaves and the usual presence of a leaf bud sinus. Distinguished from the other *Veronica pubescens* subspecies by the consistent presence of hairs (these > 0.2 mm long) on underside of leaf midrib and lamina

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Coromandel Peninsula, Papanui Point, Pakihi and Rotoroa Islands)

HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane. Associated with pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) forest, on steep cliff faces, rock strewn ground, slip scars, and on offshore rock stacks. Also inland along river margins, track sides, around old gold mines and quarry workings

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica pubescens Benth. subsp. *pubescens*

SYNONYMS

Hebe pubescens (Benth.) Cockayne et Allan subsp. *pubescens*

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

August - April

FRUITING

November - June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and fresh. Does best in full sun, in a free draining, fertile soil. It needs to be pruned hard back after flowering to encourage a compact growth habit.

OTHER INFORMATION

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'.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Range Restricted

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly et al. 2003: Geographic variation in morphology and flavonoid chemistry in **Hebe pubescens** and *H. bollonsii* (Scrophulariaceae), including a new infraspecific classification for *H. pubescens*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 41: 23–53

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet by P.J. de Lange (8 September 2007): Description adapted from Bayley et al. (2003)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-pubescens-subsp-pubescens/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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

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