

# Veronica vernicosa

## COMMON NAME

hebe

## SYNONYMS

*Veronica vernicosa* var. *gracilis* Cheeseman, *Veronica vernicosa* var. *multiflora* Cheeseman, *Veronica greyi* J.B.Armstr., *Hebe vernicosa* (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica vernicosa* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

HEBVER

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Spreading low growing untidy shrub bearing pairs of glossy oval leaves inhabiting beech forest treelines of northern South Island. Leaves 5-20mm long to 8mm wide, with scattered hairs on margin (lens needed). Flowers white, tube hidden by green base, in spikes to 7cm long towards tip of twigs.

## DISTRIBUTION

Northern South Island. from Goulard Downs in the northwest to the St James Range in the south, and as far east as the Robertson Range, near Picton.

## HABITAT

Grows in beech forest at a range of elevations, often at or near the treeline.



Cobb ridge, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Cobb ridge, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low shrub to 0.8 m tall. Branches spreading or ascending, old stems dark grey or brown; branchlets green or brown, hairs bifarious to uniform (hairs on leaf decurrencies often finer and shorter than those between); internodes 1.5-7 mm; leaf decurrencies evident or obscure. Leaf bud distinct; sinus broad and acute or almost shield shaped. Leaves subdistichous, patent or erecto-patent; lamina elliptic or obovate, very slightly concave, 5-20 x (2.5-) 3.5-7.5 (-8) mm; apex apiculate and obtuse or subacute; midrib depressed to grooved above and thickened below (at least slightly); margin sometimes cartilaginous, glabrous or ciliolate; upper surface dark green, glossy, with few or without evident stomata, hairy along midrib (usually) or glabrous; lower surface dull or slightly glossy (but less so than upper surface). Inflorescences with (9-) 12-35 (-43) flowers, lateral, unbranched, (1.6-) 2.5-5 (-7.2) cm; peduncle (0.2-) 0.5-1.2 (-1.4) cm; rachis (1.2-) 1.6-5.5 (-6) cm. Bracts mostly opposite and decussate below and becoming alternate above or alternate, ovate or deltoid, obtuse to acute, glabrous outside. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels 0-3.5 mm. Calyx (1.2-) 1.4-1.8 (-2.5) mm; lobes ovate to elliptic, almost always obtuse or rarely subacute (e.g. in some material from Picton and Pelorus Sound). Corolla tube glabrous, 0.6-1.5 x 0.8-1.3 mm, shorter than calyx; lobes white at anthesis, ovate (sometimes narrowly) or elliptic, obtuse, suberect to patent, longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments 3-5 (-5.5) mm; anthers pale pink or white, approximately 1.25-1.75 mm. Ovary 0.7-1.4 mm; ovules approximately 9-10 per locule; style 2.7-5.5 mm. Capsules subacute or obtuse, 2.8-4.2 x 1.6- 2.5 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-½-way to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid or obovoid or oblong, pale brown, 1.3-1.5 x 0.9-1.1 mm, micropylar rim 0.3-0.5 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *V. canterburiensis*, with which it often co-occurs. Specimens with flowers or fruits are readily separated, but sterile specimens can be difficult to identify. *V. vernicosa* differs by having corolla tubes shorter than calyces; calyces (1.2-) 1.4-1.8 (-2.5) mm long; usually longer, tapering inflorescences of (1.6-) 2.5-5 (-7.2) cm; pale pink or white anthers. It has, in comparison to *V. canterburiensis*, a more restricted ecological range, occurring in or at the margins of beech forest and (although it can be common at or near treeline) is not widespread in open, subalpine habitats.

## FLOWERING

(October-) November-January

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

(December-) February-May (-September)

## 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'.

**vernicosa:** Varnished

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

The locality "Arthur's Pass" given on CHR 63350 (G. Simpson, undated) is probably erroneous, and is not represented on the distribution map (see Bayly & Kellow, 2006).

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## 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. 226.

## MORE INFORMATION

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