Veronica annulata

COMMON NAME
hebe

SYNONYMS
Veronica armstrongii var. annulata Petrie, Hebe annulata (Petrie) Andersen, Hebe annulata (Petrie) Cockayne et Allan nom. illeg., Leonohebe annulata (Petrie) Heads

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY
Veronica annulata (Petrie) Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, St, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp, St
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Sparse

Wye Valley. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Spreading low shrub bearing masses of narrow scaly twigs inhabiting the mountains of western Otago. Leaves scale-like, rounded, clasping stem, with a fuzzy line between the hairy-margined leaves (lens needed for both). Flowers white, in groups of 4-10 at tips of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Eastern South Island where known from Otago and Southland. Sparingly recorded from the Remarkables, Hector, Criffel Ranges and the Takitimu Mountains, also known by one old hsitoric gathering from near Kurow.

HABITAT
Upper montane to subalpine. A species of open, sparsely vegetated shrubland where it is usually found at the toe of steep slopes, often in and around boulders.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Low, spreading shrub up to 0.5 x 1 m. Branches whip-like, at first erect or ascending, becoming spreading at maturity; internodes 0.5-2.2 mm; branchlets, including leaves 1.8-2.9 mm wide; fused leaf bases finely hairy; nodal joint obscure, exposed or hidden; leaves long-persistent, not readily abscising. Leaves fused, scale-like, appressed, not thickened near apex; apex obtuse, sometimes finely mucronate; margin conspicuously fine-ciliate; exposed surface (the leaf undersides) green to yellowish-green, veins not evident. Inflorescence 25-70 mm long, terminal, unbranched, bearing 4-10 flowers. Bracts opposite and decussate, fused, semi-circular, obtuse. Flowers white, sessile. Calyx 1.5-2.2 mm, 3-lobed, that is with anterior lobes fused to apex (forming one large lobe which may split longitudinally); lobes broadly oblong, obtuse or slightly emarginate. Corolla tube 1.5-1.7 x 1.2 mm, funnelform, shorter than or equaling calyx, inner portion hairy; lobes white at anthesis, broadly oblong, elliptic to obovate, obtuse, erect or recurved, longer then corolla tube. Stamen filaments 2.6-3.5 mm; anthers 1-1.2 mm, pink or purple. Ovary 0.6-0.8 mm, globose, apex didymous; style 2.5-4.2. Capsules 1.8-2.7 x 1.5-1.9 mm, pale brown, obtuse. Seeds 0.9-1.3 x 0.5-0.8 mm, weakly flattened, pale brown, obovoid or narrow and irregular, more or less smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA
Very similar to Veronica armstrongii and perhaps it might be better placed within that species, possibly at subspecies rank. The main differences are that in comparison to V. armstrongii, V. annulata has stouter branchlets, the leaves are more imbricating (overlapping), more strongly appressed, and their apices typical obtuse, and only rarely mucronate. Cytologically Veronica annulata is diploid (2n = 42) and V. armstrongii tetraploid (2n = 82). Ecologically Veronica annulata appears to be prefer well drained, rocky ground, often at the toe of avalanche debris, or rotational slumps, or in colluvial material. Veronica armstrongii is consistently found in or near permanently wet ground, usually in close association with bog pine (Halocarpus bidwillii).

FLOWERING
October - January

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, White

FRUITING
December - March

LIFE CYCLE
Seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from semi-hardwood cuttings and from fresh seed. An attractive plant for a moist, sunny situation in a free draining soil. A shy flowering species that is intolerant of high humidity and wet climates.

THREATS
Aside form Kurow (where the species has not been seen for well over 100 years) there is no evidence of any decline. Hebe annulata just seems to be a naturally, extremely uncommon, plant which in the wild is known from only a few widely scattered locations, and from very few mature individuals.

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’.
annulata: From the Latin annulatus ‘ringed, ring-shaped’

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 November 2009). Description based on Bayly & Kellow (2006)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bayly M. and Kellow A. (2006). An Illustrated Guide to New Zealand Hebes.Te Papa Press: Wellington
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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-annulata/