

Veronica bollonsii

COMMON NAME

hebe

SYNONYMS

Hebe bollonsii (Cockayne) Cockayne

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica bollonsii Cockayne

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing pairs of dark green oval pointed leaves inhabiting coastal sites in eastern Northland and offshore islands. Leaves 20–95 mm long by 15–31 mm wide. Leaf bud with gap at base. Twigs green. Flowers tinged pink becoming white with age, in short spikes, to 15 cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (outer Hauraki Gulf where it is mainly found on the Poor Knights and Hen & Chicken island groups. Also local on rock stacks and headlands from Tutukaka north to about Mimiwhangata).

HABITAT

Petrel scrub, low wind shorn shrubland and open coastal forest or on rock stacks. On the Poor Knights Islands and Hen & Chicken Islands it is often in low wind shorn petrel scrub on exposed shore platforms or on slip scars or in wind damaged coastal forest. Frequent on rocky headlands and sometimes on rock stacks.



Hebe bollonsii shrub in flower, Aorangi Island, Poor Knights Islands, December 1993,.

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



Hebe bollonsii - flowering specimen, Ex Cult. ex Taranga (Hen) Island. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 11/11/2006, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Heavily branched, rather bushy shrub 2 × 3 m. **Branches** numerous, erect, old stems grey to grey-brown; branchlets green, minutely puberulent, glabrate; internodes 1–45 mm; leaf decurrencies evident. **Leaf bud** with sinus. **Leaves** erect to patent; lamina 14–130 × 8–42 mm, upper surface dark green, usually glossy, hairy along midrib, undersides light green dull or glossy oblanceolate, obovate to oblong or elliptic, coriaceous, more or less flat, apex shortly apiculate, subacute to obtuse, secondary venation evident in young leaves; margin narrowly cartilaginous, glabrous or minutely ciliate. **Inflorescences** lateral, unbranched racemes, 35–150 mm long, bearing 24–125 flowers; peduncle 6–30 mm, rachis 27–126 mm. **Bracts** alternate or lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate or ovate, acute. **Flowers** on pedicels 1–7 mm long. Calyx 2.5–5.5 mm; lobes lanceolate, acute, rarely sparsely hairy on the outside. **Corolla tube** 3–5 × 1.9–2.5 mm, funnellform, hairy inside and often outside (near where lobes diverge); **corolla lobes** equalling or longer than corolla tube, tinged very pale mauve at anthesis soon fading to white, lanceolate or narrowly elliptic, subacute, anterior lobe obtuse; patent to recurved. **Stamen filaments** 3.8–7 mm; anthers 2–2.7 mm, mauve or purple. **Ovary** 0.6–1.2 mm; style 5.5–8.5 mm. **Capsules** 2.5–5.5 × 1.8–4 mm, subacute. **Seeds** 1–1.7 × 0.9–1.3 mm, straw-yellow, broad-ellipsoid, more or less winged, flattened.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *Veronica pubescens* subsp. *sejuncta* from which it differs by its glabrescent to minutely puberulent stems and foliage, consistent lack of a leaf bud sinus, usually much broader leaves, and uniformly lighter coloured flowers—*V. bollonsii* never has the deep violet or dark mauve flower colours occasionally seen in *V. pubescens* subsp. *sejuncta*.

FLOWERING

September–February (often sporadic throughout the year)

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

Present throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from semi-hard wood cuttings and fresh seed. A spectacular shrub which deserves to be more widely grown. It is extremely floriferous. Plants respond well to a very hard pruning immediately after flowering—cut back by at least one-third—and do best in full sun, in a free draining, fertile soil.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon, range restricted species virtually confined to offshore islands where it is under no obvious threats.

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'.

bollonsii: Named in honour of Captain John P. Bollon (1862–1929)

TAXANOMIC NOTES

It has been reported from Ponui Island in the southern Hauraki Gulf e.g., Metcalf (2006). That record is erroneous being based on a plant collected wild from Ponui by Scott Lowry in 1993 and first cultivated at Percy Reserve, Petone in that year before general distribution. That plant, which is vegetatively somewhat similar to *Veronica bollonsii* (though it has a leaf bud sinus) is a hybrid cultivar involving *H. speciosa* and possibly *V. bollonsii* which was planted on that island as part of a revegetation project (David Chamberlin pers. comm., 2005). It is not *Veronica bollonsii*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2006. Description based on Bayly & Kellow (2006).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Bayly MJ, Kellow AV. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Te Papa Press, Wellington, NZ. 388 p.
- Metcalf L. 2006. Hebes - a guide to species, hybrids, and allied genera. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, USA. 260 p.
- Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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