Veronica canterburiensis

COMMON NAME
hebe

SYNONYMS
Hebe vernicosa var. canterburiensis (J.B.Armstr.) Cockayne et Allan,
Hebe canterburiensis (J.B.Armstr.) L.B.Moore

FAMILY
Plantaginaceae

Hebe canterburiensis. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

AUTHORITY
Veronica canterburiensis J.B.Armstr.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE
HEBCAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Low growing shrub with scattered erect branches bearing pairs of oval pointed leaves mainly in northern South Island mountains. Leaves hard, 8-15mm long by 3.5-6.5mm wide, with tiny hairs on margin (lens needed). Leaf bud with narrow pointed gap between leaves at base. Flowers white, in spike to 3cm long.

DISTRIBUTION
North and South Island - Southern North Island (Tararua Range near Mt Holdsworth); South Island mountains, mostly on or west of the Main Divide (an exception being Mt Riley, Richmond Range, Marlborough), from North-West Nelson to Arthur's Pass, with apparent southern disjunctions to south Westland and possibly to Southland.

HABITAT
Beech forest at or close to tree-line, and in subalpine grassland and shrubland.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Openly branched, spreading low shrub to 1 m tall. Branches spreading or decumbent or ascending; branchlets green (with dark bands at nodes) or red-brown or brown, puberulent, hairs uniform (usually) or bifarious (rarely); internodes (1-) 2-6 (-7.5) mm; leaf decurrencies obscure, or evident and extended for length of internode. Leaf bud distinct; sinus narrow and acute, or broad and acute. Leaves subdistichous, erecto-patent or patent; lamina elliptic or ovate or obovate, rigid, concave, 8-15 (-18.5) x (3.2-) 3.5-6.5 (-7.8) mm; apex subacute or obtuse; base cuneate (usually) or truncate; margin sometimes cartilaginous, ciliolate to puberulent (almost always some hairs) or rarely glabrous; upper surface green, glossy (usually) or dull, with few or without evident stomata, minutely hairy along midrib (especially toward base); lower surface green, usually dull; petiole 1-2.5 (-3) mm. Juvenile leaves entire, minutely ciliolate and midrib minutely puberulent above. Inflorescences with 5-12 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 1-3 cm; peduncle 0.2-1 cm; rachis 1-2 (-2.5) cm. Bracts alternate or opposite and decussate below and becoming alternate above, ovate or elliptic or deltoid, obtuse to acute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels (0-) 0.3-3 (-4) mm. Calyx 2-4.1 mm; lobes ovate (mostly) or deltoid or elliptic, subacute or obtuse or acute (rarely). Corolla tube glabrous, 1.4-3.5 x 1-1.5 (-2) mm, contracted at base, longer than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, ovate or obovate, obtuse or subacute, suberect to recurved, longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments remaining erect or slightly diverging with age, 3-5 mm; anthers purple or magenta, (0.85-) 1-1.5 (-1.65) mm. Ovary 1.1-1.8 mm; ovules 13-22 per locule, in 1-3 layers; style (3.5-) 4-7.2 mm. Capsules subacute or acute, (2.6-) 3-4.9 x 2.1-3.8 mm, loculicidal split extending up to ½-way to base. Seeds flattened (sometimes strongly), broad ellipsoid to discoid, more or less weakly winged, brown, 1.3-1.7 x 1-1.4 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.5 mm

SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to V. vernicosa, with which it co-occurs on the mountains of Nelson. Specimens with flowers or fruits are readily separated, but sterile specimens may be difficult to identify. V. canterburiensis differs by having: corolla tubes equal to or longer than calyces; calyces 2-4.1 mm long; usually shorter inflorescences of 1-3 cm; and magenta or purple anthers. It has, in comparison to V. vernicosa, a wider ecological range, occurring not only in or at the margins of beech forest (especially close to the tree-line), but also more widely in open habitats of the subalpine and penalpine zones.

FLOWERING

(October-) November-January (-April)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

(November-) December-April (-October)

LIFE CYCLE

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’.

canterburiensis: (-ensis = an adjectival suffix implying origin or place), implies that the species occurs in Canterbury, which, when the name was first published (Armstrong 1879), was the extent of its known distribution.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The three disjunct, southernmost distribution records are each represented only by single collections. The southernmost of these, based on a specimen labelled “The Hump, Fiord[land] Co[unty]”, J.C. Smith, (undated), WELT 5358, in particular, requires confirmation.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Armstrong, J.B. 1879 Descriptions of some new native plants. *New Zealand Country Journal* 3: 56-7.
Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006 An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 228.
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

MORE INFORMATION

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