

Veronica hookeri

COMMON NAME

whipcord hebe

SYNONYMS

Logania ciliolata Hook.f., *Mitrasacme hookeri* Buchanan, *Veronica gilliesiana* Kirk, *Hebe ciliolata* (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan; *Leonohebe ciliolata* (Hook.f.) Heads

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica hookeri (Buchanan) Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

LEOCIL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing green leafless cross-shaped (in cross section) twigs inhabiting South Island mountains north of the Waitaki River. Leaves scale-like, narrow, overlapping, clasping stem, margin with pale hairs and tip with pale pit (lens needed for both). Flowers white, in clusters of 2-6 towards tips of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of South Island, chiefly on or west of the Main Divide, from near Boulder Lake, northwest Nelson, to the Ben Ohau Range, Canterbury, and possibly to Mt Alta, Otago.

HABITAT

Grows on alpine rock outcrops, and boulder fields, often in exposed situations.



Mt Peel, Nelson, December. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Nelson Lake National Park. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 08/01/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Subshrub to 0.3 m tall, of semiwhipcord form. Branches decumbent; internodes 0.4-2 (-2.5) mm; branchlets, including leaves, 3-8.5 mm wide, cruciform in transvers section; connate leaf bases glabrous: leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves connate, appressed to erecto-patent; lamina narrow-oblong (above a broad base); venation not evident in fresh leaves; margin ciliate; lower surface dark green, glossy. Inflorescences with 2-6 flowers, lateral (obscuring vegetative tip when numerous), unbranched, 0.4-1 cm; peduncle 0.05-0.4 cm, hairy or glabrous; rachis glabrous or hairy. Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, deltoid or narrowly oblong, obtuse. Flowers male or female (on different plants). Pedicels absent or if evident then always shorter than bracts, 0-1 mm, glabrous or hairy. Calyx 2.3-3.5 mm; lobes deltoid or oblong (often narrowly so), obtuse. with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia, rarely hairy outside (especially toward base). Corolla tube glabrous; tube of male flowers 1.6-2.3 x 1.3-2 mm, Cylindric (or sometimes slightly expanded around middle), shorter than or equalling calyx: tube of female flowers 1.2-1.6 x 1.4-1.6 mm, funnellform and contracted at base (may also be expanded near middle), shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, usually broadly ovate or rhomboid or obovate, obtuse, suberect to recurved, longer than corolla tube (often more markedly so in female flowers). Stamen filaments remaining erect, 0.4 -2.5 mm (female 0.4-1 mm: male 2-2.5 mm); anthers purple or magenta, 1.3-1.7 mm; sterile anthers of female flowers purple or magenta, 0.3-0.8 mm. Ovary ovoid or ellipsoid, 0.9-1.3 mm; ovules 5-10 per locule, in 2 vertical rows on placenta or scattered on a hemispherical placenta; style 1.5-2.7 mm (usually shorter in female flowers than male flowers); stigma larger in female flowers, with long, multicellular papillae (papillae on stigmas of male flowers are not prominent). Capsules angustiseptate, obtuse, 3-4.3 mm long, 1.6-3.3 mm thick, septicial split extending ½ to all way to base (usually to base), loculicidal split extending 1/3-¾ way to base. Seeds 0.3-1 (-1.3) mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species, distinguished from other semi-whipcords by having leaves more or less oblong above a broad base and a more or less square leaf apex that usually has a small, sunken hydathode. It possibly intergrades, or hybridises, *V. tumida* at some localities (see notes for that species).

FLOWERING

(October-) November-February (-July)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

January-Mar (-August)

LIFE CYCLE

Seeds are dispersed by ballistic projection, wind and water (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'.

hookeri: Named after Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (born 1817) - a world famous botanist who travelled on the Antarctic expedition of 1839 under the command of Sir James Ross and wrote "Handbook of New Zealand Flora" published in 1864-67 describing many specimens sent to Kew by collectors. He died in 1911 and has a memorial stone at Westminster Abbey London.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Wilson (1996) suggested that it may "merge with *V. tetrasticha*", but herbarium specimens show no evidence of this. The record from Mount Alta, is based on the account of Buchanan (1882; as *Mitrasaeme hookeri*). However, the specimen illustrated in that article (Herbarium Buchanan, WELT) gives no locality information. Buchanan's article also, and probably erroneously, recorded *V. quadrifaria* from Mount Alta.

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 292 pp.
- Buchanan, J. 1882. On the alpine Flora of New Zealand. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 14: 342-56.
- 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.
- Wilson, H.D. 1996. Wild Plants of Mount Cook National Park. 2nd edn. Christchurch: Manuka Press.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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