

Veronica leiophylla

SYNONYMS

Hebe leiophylla (Cheeseman) Andersen, *Hebe leiophylla* (Cheeseman) Cockayne et Allan nom. superf., nom. illeg., *Veronica ligustrifolia* var. *gracillima* Kirk, *Veronica gracillima* (Kirk) Cheeseman, *xHebe gracillima* (Kirk) Cockayne et Allan, *Hebe gracillima* (Kirk) Cockayne et Allan, *Veronica parviflora* var. *phillyreaefolia* Hook.f.

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica leiophylla Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HEBLEI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 80

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub bearing pairs of narrow leaves and long erect flower spikes inhabiting the northern South Island. Twigs fuzzy (lens needed). Leaves variable, to 56mm long, with a finely hairy margin (lens needed). Leaf bud with small gap between base of leaves. Flowers white, in a spike to 17cm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Widespread on northern South Island, north from the Organ Range. and Greymouth.

HABITAT

Grows in scrub and at forest margins in a range of situations, sometimes in swampy sites. from sea-level to the treeline.



In flower, Takaka River Gorge, N. W. Nelson, Jan, 2013. Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken: 01/01/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub to 3 m tall. Branches erect, old stems brown or grey; branchlets green, puberulent, hairs uniform; internodes (2-) 4-15 (-30) mm; leaf decurrencies evident or obscure. Leaf bud distinct; sinus small and rounded, or narrow and acute. Leaves erecto-patent to recurved; lamina linear-lanceolate or oblong-elliptic, thin or subcoriaceous, flat or slightly m-shaped in transverse section, (8-) 15-40 (-56) x (2-) 4-8 (-10.5) mm; apex acute to obtuse; margin sometimes cartilaginous, puberulent; upper surface green, dull or glossy, without evident or with few stomata, hairy along midrib and sometimes covered with minute glandular hairs (when young); lower surface green or light green, glabrous or hairy along midrib; petiole 0-2 (-3) mm, hairy along margins and above and sometimes below. Inflorescences with 14-150 flowers, lateral, unbranched, 3.5-16.5cm; peduncle 0.5-2.6cm; rachis 2.5-14.1 cm. Bracts alternate, lanceolate to elliptic, subacute to acute. Flowers hermaphrodite. pedicels (0.9-) 1.5-3 mm. Calyx 1.5-2.5 (-2.9) mm; lobes elliptic or lanceolate or more rarely deltoid or oblong, subacute to obtuse or rarely acute. Corolla tube hairy inside and sometimes sparsely hairy outside, (1.5-) 2-3 x 1.7-2.5 mm, funnelform, shorter to longer than calyx; lobes white or tinged mauve at anthesis, ovate or elliptic, obtuse, suberect to patent, longer than corolla tube, sometimes with a few hairs toward base on inner surface. Stamen filaments (4.5-) 5.5-7.5 mm; anthers mauve or pink, 1.8-2.1 mm. Ovary very rarely hairy, approximately 0.8-1.2 mm; ovules approximately 11-12 per locule; style 4.7-7 mm, very rarely hairy. Capsules obtuse or subacute, 2.7-4.5 (-5) x (1.8-) 2.3-3 (-3.5) mm, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -way to base (most approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ -way). Seeds strongly flattened, more or less discoid, winged, pale brown, 1.2-1.7 x 1-1.4 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.4 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

It sometimes resembles *V. phormiiphila*, and differences between them are not always clear-cut (see notes under *V. phormiiphila*). It often grows with *V. salicifolia* (which generally has much larger leaves) and *V. subfulvida* (see notes under that species).

FLOWERING

(December-) January-April (-June)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

(December-) February-June (-November)

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'.

leiophylla: Smooth-leaved

TAXONOMIC NOTES

A variable species, particularly in leaf shape, distinguished from most others by the combination of: its leaf size and shape; often small sinus; densely and uniformly hairy branchlets; and simple inflorescences.

This species was included as *Hebe gracillima* in the treatment of Moore (in Allan 1961), where the name *V. leiophylla*, which has historically been applied to a range of species (including *V. traversii*, *V. strictissima* and *V. rakniensis*), was placed *incertae sedis*. Examination of type specimens of the two names suggests that they are conspecific and *V. leiophylla*, having priority over *H. gracillima*, is the name that must be adopted under the rules of the ICBN. Any specimens previously identified by us as *H. gracillima* are *V. leiophylla* as treated here.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Volume 1. Wellington: Government Printer.

Bayly, M.J., Kellow, A.V. 2006. An illustrated guide to New Zealand Hebes. Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa press pg. 264.

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

Please cite as: Ward, M.D. (Year at time of access): *Veronica leiophylla* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated).

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-leiophylla/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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