

# Veronica lycopodioides

## COMMON NAME

whipcord hebe

## SYNONYMS

*Hebe lycopodioides* (Hook.f.) Andersen, *Hebe lycopodioides* (Hook.f.) Cockayne et Allan nom. superf., nom. illeg., *Leonohebe lycopodioides* (Hook.f.) Heads var. *lycopodioides*, *Leonohebe lycopodioides* var. *patula* (G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson) Heads, *Hebe lycopodioides* subsp. *patula* (G.Simpson & J.S.Thomson) Wagstaff et Wardle, *Hebe lycopodioides* var. *patula* G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica lycopodioides* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

HEBLYC

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Spreading low growing shrub bearing yellowish-green erect narrow short scaly twigs inhabiting South Island mountains. Twigs 2.3-3.3mm wide. Leaves scale-like, striped, closely packed, tip pointed, clasping stem, sometimes with a hairy margin (lens needed). Flowers white, in groups of 6-16 at tips of twigs.

## DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of South Island, chiefly on or east of the Main Divide, from the Bryant Range in the north to the Kakanui Mountains in the south.

## HABITAT

Grows in penalpine grassland and subalpine shrubland.



Avalanche peak, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Rachael Range. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 1 m tall, of whipcord form. Branches ascending or decumbent or erect; internodes (0.55-) 0.8-1.3 (-1.55) mm; branchlets, including leaves, (1.8-) 2.3-3.3 (-4.2) mm wide; connate leaf bases hairy; nodal joint distinct, usually hidden (but sometimes barely) or exposed; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina not thickened near the apex; apex mucronate (usually) to subacute; margin ciliate or ciliolate; lower surface dark green to yellowish-green, with prominent shallow veins that give a ribbed or striped appearance (at least faintly), dull to slightly glossy. Juvenile leaves crenate to pinnatifid, ciliate (near base and on lower surface). Reversion leaves entire or incised to pinnatifid, glabrous. Inflorescences with (4-) 6-16 (-20) flowers, terminal, unbranched, (0.35-) 0.5-1.6 (-1.9) cm; rachis hairy (with long, white, tangled hairs). Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, broadly deltoid, acuminate to subacute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Calyx 2.8-3.5 mm, 4-5-lobed (5th lobe small, posterior); lobes lanceolate or elliptic or oblong, obtuse to acute, with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia (glandular hairs usually obscured by long eglandular hairs). Corolla tube hairy inside, 2.5-3.2 x 1.1-1.3 mm, cylindrical, longer than or approximately equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, elliptic or ovate, obtuse (posterior sometimes emarginate), suberect to patent, shorter to longer than corolla tube. Stamen filaments 2.5-3.6 mm; anthers magenta, approximately 1-1.3 mm. Ovary 0.7-0.8 mm, apex (in septum view) didymous; ovules approximately 13-16 per locule, marginal on a flattened placenta (but sometimes recurved and appearing scattered), in 1-2 layers; style 2.5-7 mm. Capsules obtuse, (1.7-) 2.2-3.4 x (1.3-) 1.8-2.4 mm, loculicidal split extending  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ -way to base. Seeds flattened, ellipsoid, more or less finely papillate, pale brown, 0.9-1.5 x approximately 0.7 mm, micropylar rim approximately 0.2 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *V. poppelwellii*, from which it is distinguished by its strongly mucronate, acute or apiculate leaf apices.

## FLOWERING

(November-) December-February (-April)

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

January-April (-December)

## 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'.

**lycopodioides:** Resembling a club moss, from the genus Lycopodium and -oides a Greek suffix which means 'resembling'.

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

Plants from near Lewis Pass were included in *var. patula* (Simpson & Thomson 1943; Ashwin, in Allan 1961) or *subsp. patula* (Wagstaff & Wardle 1999), on the basis of their less mucronate leaves, often slender branchlets and usually low-growing habit. Despite obvious geographic trends in these characters, specimens cannot be separated into clear-cut morphological groups, and no infraspecific taxa are recognised here.

Historical specimens of H.J. Matthews (WELT I 7415, 17420; AK 8215, 8216) suggest the species may also occur in the Greenstone Valley and Humboldt Mountains, western side of Lake Wakatipu, but these localities have not been substantiated by recent collections (and at least some of Matthews specimens are based on cultivated plants, and there might have been confusion regarding original provenance).

## ATTRIBUTION

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

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Allan, H. H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 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. 100.
- Simpson, G. and Thomson, J. S. 1943. Notes on some New Zealand plants and descriptions of new species. *Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 73: 155- 71.
- 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
- Wagstaff, S. J. and Wardle, P. 1999. Whipcord hebes - systematics, distribution, ecology and evolution. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37: 17-39.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-lycopodioides/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

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