

# Veronica poppelwellii

## COMMON NAME

hebe

## SYNONYMS

*Veronica imbricata* Petrie nom. illeg., *Hebe imbricata* Cockayne et Allan, *Leonohebe imbricata* (Cockayne et Allan) Heads, *Veronica poppelwellii* Cockayne, *Hebe poppelwellii* (Cockayne) Cockayne et Allan, *Leonohebe poppelwellii* (Cockayne) Heads, *Hebe imbricata* subsp. *poppelwellii* (Cockayne) Wagstaff et Wardle, *Veronica hectorii* var. *gracilior* Petrie ex Poppelw., nom. nud.

## FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Veronica poppelwellii* Cockayne

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

HEBIMB

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Range Restricted

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Spreading low-growing shrub bearing yellowish-green erect narrow short scaly twigs inhabiting southern South Island mountains. Twigs 2-3.2 mm wide. Leaves scale-like, striped, closely packed, tip rounded, clasping stem, sometimes with a hairy margin (lens needed). Flowers white, in groups of 6-12 at tips of twigs.

## DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of Otago and Southland, from the Rock and Pillar Range in the northeast to near Green Lake in the southwest, including the Lammermoor Range, Lammerlaw Range, Mt Benger, Old Man Range, Garvie Mountains and Eyre Mountains.

## HABITAT

Penalpine grassland and low shrubland.



Mt Burns. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



At Mt Burns (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spreading low or bushy shrub to 0.8 m tall, of whipcord form. Branches erect or ascending; internodes 0.5- 1.25 (-1.4) mm; branchlets, including leaves, 2-3.2 (-3.5) mm wide; connate leaf bases hairy; nodal joint distinct, almost always hidden; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaves connate, appressed; lamina not thickened near the apex; apex obtuse (sometimes strongly keeled) or subapiculate; margin ciliate to minutely ciliolate; lower surface yellowish-green, with prominent shallow veins that give a ribbed or striped appearance, dull or slightly glossy. Reversion leaves incised or entire, glabrous. Inflorescences with 6-12 (-18) flowers, terminal, unbranched, 0.3-1.3 cm. Bracts opposite and decussate, connate, ovate (sometimes broadly), obtuse or almost acuminate. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels absent. Calyx 2.2-3 mm, 4-5-lobed (5th lobe small, posterior); lobes broadly oblong or elliptic, obtuse or subacute, with mixed glandular and eglandular cilia (eglandular hairs long, flattened and tangled). Corolla tube hairy inside, 1.7-2.5 x 1- 1.6 mm, shortly cylindrical or funnelform, shorter than or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, elliptic (sometimes broadly) or circular, obtuse, (posterior sometimes emarginate), patent to recurved, longer than or equalling corolla tube. Stamen filaments 2.5-4.5 mm; anthers magenta, 1- 1.6 mm. Ovary globose or ovoid, 0.5-1.3 mm, apex (in septum view) didymous; ovules 11-24 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 3.6-5 mm. Capsules obtuse, 2-2.5 (-3) x 1-2 mm, loculicidal split extending ¼-½-way to base. Seed characters not recorded in Bayly & Kellow (2006).

## SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *V. lycopodioides*, from which it is distinguished by its rounded to subacute leaf apices.

## FLOWERING

(December-) January- March

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

February (-July-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'.

**poppelwellii:** After Poppelwell

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

The circumscription adopted in Bayly & Kellow (2006) includes plants recognised as *Hebe poppelwellii* by Ashwin (in Allan 1961). In the strict sense, *V. poppelwellii* (formerly *H. imbricata*) includes only plants from between Lake Monowai and Mount Burns, the south-westernmost points of the distribution. Plants from this area tend to have greener, longer, less strongly keeled leaves and stouter branchlets than plants from localities further east and north, traditionally included in *H. poppelwellii*. The two taxa should possibly be treated as distinct at an infraspecific rank, as they were by Wagstaff & Wardle (1999), but, despite some obvious geographic trends, consistent differences are difficult to identify.

## 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. Pp 102.

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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### **MORE INFORMATION**

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