

Veronica venustula

COMMON NAME

hebe

SYNONYMS

Veronica azurea Colenso, *Hebe laevis* Cockayne et Allan, *Veronica laevis* Benth. in DC. nom. illeg., *Hebe venustula* (Colenso) L.B.Moore

FAMILY

Plantaginaceae

AUTHORITY

Veronica venustula Colenso

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

HEBVEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 120

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 glossy oval leaves inhabiting subalpine areas of the North Island (except Tararua Range). Leaves 8-20mm long by 5-8mm wide, narrowing to tip and base. Leaf bud with small gap between leaf bases. Flowers on short stalks, in spikes to 7cm long towards tip of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

Mountains of North Island, including the Raukumara Range, volcanoes of central North Island, Mount Taranaki, and the Pouakai, Kaimanawa, Kaweka, Ruahine and Aorangi ranges.

HABITAT

It occurs chiefly in subalpine shrubland/penalpine grassland, but apparently occurs at lower elevations in the eastern Wairarapa.



Desert road. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Desert road. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Bushy shrub to 1.4 (-1.8) m tall. Branches erect, old stems dark brown or grey; branchlets green, puberulent, hairs bifarious; internodes (1-) 2-6 (-11) mm; leaf decurrencies evident and often swollen. Leaf bud distinct; sinus narrow to broad, acute. Leaves decussate to somewhat subdistichous, erect to erecto-patent; lamina elliptic to obovate, rigid or coriaceous, concave, (4-) 8-20 (-29) x (3-) 5-8 (-10) mm; apex subacute to obtuse; midrib thickened below and at least slightly depressed to grooved above; margin sometimes cartilaginous, usually minutely papillate and sometimes also ciliate; upper surface dark green, glossy, with few or without evident stomata, glabrous or hairy along midrib or hairy toward base; lower surface green; petiole(0.5-) 1-3 (-6) mm, glabrous or hairy along margins or above. Inflorescences with 7-75 flowers, lateral, unbranched (often exclusively) or with 3 or more branches, 1.4-5 (-6.8) cm; peduncle 0.4-1.4 cm; rachis 1 -3.5 (-5.7) cm. Bracts opposite and decussate or lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, lanceolate (usually) or ovate, subacute or acute. Flowers hermaphrodite. Pedicels 0.5-3 (-7) mm, hairy (usually) to almost glabrous. Calyx 2.3-2.8 (-4) mm; lobes ovate or oblong or rarely lanceolate, subacute. Corolla tube hairy inside, 3-4.2 x 2-2.6 mm, cylindrical or funnellform, longer than calyx; lobes while tinged withmauve at anthesis, often white with age, ovate (sometimes broadly) or elliptic or lanceolate, obtuse. patent to recurved, longer to shorter than corolla tube, sometimes with a few hairs toward base on inner surface. Stamen filaments white or faintly coloured, 4-7 mm; anthers mauve to magenta, 2.1-2.6 mm. Ovary approximately 0.9-1.3 mm; ovules approximately 8-10 per locule, in 1 (-2) layers; style 6.5-8 (-11) mm. Capsules subacute, 3.5-5 x 2.3-3.5 mm, loculicidal split extending 1/3-1/2-way to base. Seeds flattened (sometimes strongly), ellipsoid or ovoid or oblong, not winged to more or less winged, brown, (1.3-) 1.5-2.2 x 1-1.3 (-1.5) mm, micropylar rim 0.3-0.6 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from most other *Veronica* species, especially those in the North Island, by the combination of: acute leaf bud sinuses; non-glaucous, entire leaves; pedicellate flowers; small bracts; and corolla tubes longer than surrounding calyces. Specimens are sometimes misidentified as *V. odora* (and vice versa), but the species is probably most closely related to, and not clearly morphologically separated from, *V. brachysiphon* (see notes under those species). Specimens from eastern Wairarapa Taipos often have narrow, acute leaves, and highly branched inflorescences. In these respects, they resemble *V. subfulvida*, and their relationship to that species is worthy of closer scrutiny.

FLOWERING

(December-) January-February (-March)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February-April

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'.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

A specimen resembling *V. venustula* is labelled "Kāpiti Island" (WELT 13295). Although *Veronica laevis* (a synonym of *V. venustula*) was included in a list of plants introduced to Kāpiti Island between 1924 and 1943 (Wilkinson & Wilkinson 1952), no similar specimens are known from this island, or recorded in vegetation surveys (e.g. Fuller 1985), and the specimen is not represented on the distribution map (see Bayly & Kellow, 2006). Another specimen, labelled "Mount Holdsworth, beside Powell Hut" (AK 51014), is also, in the absence of further evidence for the species' occurrence in that well-collected area, not represented on the distribution map.

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 pg. 254.
- Fuller, S. A. 1985. Kāpiti Island Vegetation. Report on a vegetation survey of Kāpiti Island 1984/85. Wellington: Department of Lands and Survey.
- 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.
- Wilkinson, A. S. and Wilkinson, A. 1952. Kāpiti Island Bird Sanctuary: a natural history of the island. Masterton: Masterton Printing Company.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: Ward, M.D. (Year at time of access): *Veronica venustula* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/veronica-venustula/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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