Veronica thomsonii

Common Name(s):

snow Hebe

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. South Island: Canterbury, central and eastern Otago

Habitat:

Alpine and high alpine herbfield, fellfield and cushion field; among rocks, in crevices, on rocky outcrops, dry stony soil, rock tors and exposed ridges.

Features*:

Perennial, rigid (to loose) cushion with many erect branches and a woody base up to 7mm thick; 1–6mm high. Branches 6–78 × 1.9–5.5 mm, glabrous. Leaves spirally imbricate, rarely approaching loosely decussate, tightly (to loosely) appressed, becoming suberect near the branch tips, sessile, medium, dark, or olive green, becoming light green, light brown and/or purple near the base, widest at or above middle, 1.74–4.67 × 0.75–2.55mm, oblanceolate, narrowly obovate or obovate, with obtuse to subacute apex, entire with concave curvature. Leaf hairs eglandular and unicellular, 0.4–1.2mm long. Leaf inner surface with dense band of hairs near middle of leaf only, appressed and appearing to cover upper half, rest glabrous, rarely with isolated to sparsely distributed hairs arranged in a patch near the middle or densely distributed all the way to the apex. Leaf outer surface with isolated hairs, rarely with sparsely to densely distributed hairs on the upper ½ or near apex only, or glabrous. Leaf margins sparsely to densely ciliate bottom 2/3 of margin, upper 1/3 glabrous except for isolated tuft of hairs at apex, rarely ciliate for whole length of margin or lacking tuft at apex. Bracts 2, 2.07–5.19 × 0.44–1.08 mm wide at the widest part, very narrowly to narrowly elliptic, narrowly lanceolate to oblanceolate, or rarely narrowly ovate, with obtuse to subacute apex. Bract hairs eglandular and unicellular, 0.3–0.8 mm long. Bract inner surface glabrous, or rarely with isolated hairs near the apex. Bract outer surface with isolated hairs, or with sparsely or densely distributed hairs on upper half only, glabrous below. Bract margins sparsely to densely ciliate whole length or on upper ½ only, becoming glabrous lower half. Flowers solitary, sessile, axillary near branch tips. Calyx 1.95–4.21mm long, persistent around capsule. Calyx lobes divided equally up to ¾ to base, rarely only up to ½ or 2/3 to base, 1.56–2.76 × 0.38–0.96mm wide at the widest part, narrowly to very narrowly elliptic, narrowly lanceolate to lanceolate, or rarely oblanceolate, with obtuse to subacute apex. Calyx lobe hairs eglandular, unicellular, 0.3–0.8 mm long. Calyx lobe inner surface glabrous, or rarely with isolated hairs near apex, or rarely with sparsely distributed hairs on upper margins. Calyx lobe outer surface with sparsely to densely distributed hairs on the upper ½ up to upper 2/3 (rarely glabrous) becoming glabrous below. Calyx lobe margins sparsely to densely ciliate for whole length, rarely glabrous near apex or becoming glabrous below. Corolla white, 1.99–5.02 × 0.95–3.58mm, salver-form. Corolla tube longer than or equal to calyx, 1.94–3.50mm long, 0.51–1.62mm wide. Corolla lobes 0.95–1.77 × 0.65–1.43mm, spreading to erect, narrowly to broadly ovate, or obovate to very broadly obovate, with obtuse apex. Filaments 2, 0.22–0.47mm long. Anthers 0.43–1.22 × 0.40–0.87mm. Style 2.82–4.59mm long, exserted 1–2mm above corolla tube and anthers. Stigma 0.09–0.23 mm wide, capitate. Ovary 0.43–1.19 × 0.38–1.26mm wide, sparsely to densely hairy at apex, hairs 0.1–0.4mm long, or sometimes glabrous or with isolated hairs only. Nectary disc 0.16–0.42mm high. Capsule laterally compressed, bilobed, with septicidal and loculicidal dehiscence, 1.49–2.79 × 1.08–2.06 mm, 0.73–1.63mm thick, densely hairy at apex, or glabrous. Seeds up to 21 per capsule, 0.33–0.86 × 0.26–1.04 mm.

Caption: Habitat, Harris Mountains, 1700m
Photographer: Jesse Bythell

Caption: Pisa, January
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

Flowering:

November - March

Fruiting:

December - March

Threats:

Not Threatened

***Attribution:**

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange (5 October 2007): Description from Meudt (2006)

References and further reading:

Meudt, H.M. 2008: Taxonomic revision of Australasian snow hebes (Veronica, Plantaginaceae). Australian Systematic Botany 21: 387–421. (as Veronica thomsonii)

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

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