



Veronica epacridea

Common Name(s):

Hebe

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

South Island mountains, chiefly on or east of the Main Divide, from the Devil Range, North-West Nelson, to the Eyre and Livingstone Mountains, Southland.

Habitat:

Open alpine areas on rock debris or scree. Together with *Veronica birleyi* and *Ranunculus grahamii*, it grows at the highest altitudes known for any vascular plant in New Zealand (approximately 2900 m a.s.l in the Malte Brun Range, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park).

Features*:

Spreading low shrub (sometimes more or less mat-like) to 0.4 m tall. Branches decumbent or ascending, old stems brown; branchlets green or purplish, puberulent to pubescent or glabrous (rarely), hairs bifarious (usually) or uniform; internodes 1-3 (-4.5) mm; leaves not readily abscising, persistent along the stem for some distance. Leaf bud tightly surrounded by recently diverged leaves. Leaves decussate, connate, usually patent to recurved or erect to erecto-patent; lamina broadly oblong or ovate or elliptic, rigid, somewhat concave or flat (plants from Otago or Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park lack thickened margins), (2.5-) 4-8 (-9) x 2.5-5.5 (-7) mm: apex obtuse or subacute; midrib thickened and evident below (usually forming a prominent keel, except on plants without a thickened leaf margin); margin not cartilaginous, conspicuously thickened (the outward manifestation of a rigid intramarginal vein) or not thickened (on plants that lack a marginal vein), commonly ciliate (toward base and, on one plant from Roys Peak, along entire margin) or minutely papillate or glabrous, sometimes tinged red, entire (usually) or minutely crenulate (rarely) or shallowly toothed (seen on one plant from Otago only); upper surface dark to light green, dull, with many stomata, glabrous; lower surface green, hairy toward base (along connate portion). Inflorescences with 2-8 flowers (per spike), terminal and lateral (arranged as spikes in the axils of little-altered leaves, forming a compact terminal flowering head), unbranched, (0.5-) 0.8-2.6 cm (whole flowering head). Bracts opposite and decussate or lowermost pair opposite, then subopposite or alternate above, connate, ovate or deltoid, obtuse or subacute or acuminate, sometimes hairy outside. Flowers hermaphrodite or female (on different plants). Pedicels absent. Calyx 3.4-5.8 mm; lobes oblong or ovate or elliptic or lanceolate, obtuse or subacute or acuminate. Corolla tube glabrous; tube of hermaphrodite flowers 3.8- 4.8 (-5.4) x 1.6-2.2 mm, cylindrical and contracted at base, equalling or longer than calyx; tube of female flowers 2.4-4 x 1.3-1.9 mm, cylindrical or funnellform, shorter than (only slightly) or equalling calyx; lobes white at anthesis, elliptic or ovate or obovate (narrowly), obtuse or subacute, suberect to recurved, shorter than corolla tube. Stamen filaments remaining erect, 0.1-1.2 mm (approximately 0.8-1.2 mm for stamens of hermaphrodite flowers, 0.1-0.4 mm for staminodes of female flowers); anthers yellow or pink to purple, 1.2-2.1 mm; sterile anthers of female flowers pink, 0.8-1.1 mm. Ovary sometimes hairy, 0.8-1.4 mm, apex (in septum view) obtuse or slightly emarginate; ovules 8-18 per locule, in 1-2 layers; style 2.5- 6(-7) mm (generally longer in hermaphrodite flowers than in female flowers), rarely hairy (especially toward base); stigma more prominent in female flowers. Capsules subacute, 2.7-4.5 x 1.5-2.6 mm, sometimes hairy, septicidal split extending $\frac{3}{4}$ -way to base or completely to base, loculicidal split extending $\frac{1}{4}$ - (mostly) to $\frac{1}{2}$ -way to base. Seeds weakly flattened, ellipsoid or ovoid or obovoid, straw-yellow, 0.8-1 (-1.1) x 0.5-0.7 mm, micropylar rim 0.2-0.3 mm.

Flowering:

December - February (-April)

Fruiting:

December - April (-September)

Threats:

Not Threatened

*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. 114

Kellow, A. V., Bayly, M. J., Mitchell, K. A., Markham, K. R. and Brownsey, P. J. 2003. A taxonomic revision of *Hebe* informal group "Connatae" (Plantaginaceae), based on morphology and flavonoid chemistry. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 41: 613-35.

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

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1982



Caption: Rachael Range

Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft



Caption: Mt St Bathans

Photographer: John Barkla