VERONICA - SPEEDWELLS

This guide is to help you get to grip with the 16 species of speedwell that occur in Ireland. There are an additional 6 rare casuals (neophytes) that are not included.

In 6 species the flowers are solitary on the stems

**Veronica filiformis**
Slender Speedwell

- Stems rooting at nodes, grows flat
- Flowers 8-10mm, blue

Lawns, short grassland

**Veronica persica**
Common Field-speedwell

- Stems not rooting at nodes
- Flowers 8-12mm, blue with lower petal white
- Hairy oval leaves, toothed

Bare soil, waste ground

**Veronica hederifolia**
Ivy-leaved Speedwell

- Stems not rooting at nodes
- Flowers 4-5mm, pale blue or white
- Extremely hairy plant
- Leaves broader than long

Bare, disturbed ground

**Veronica agrestis**
Green Field-speedwell

- Stems not rooting at nodes
- Flowers 4-6mm, pale blue with lower petal white
- Sepals oblong and blunt
- Hairy
- Leaves longer than broad, short stalked & toothed

V. polita (Grey Field-speedwell) - like V. agrestis and in similar habitats but leaves dull green and flowers bright blue. Sepals oval and pointed.
**Veronica crista-galli**  
Crested Field-speedwell

- Stems not rooting at nodes
- Flowers 5-6mm, dark blue with white centre
- Leaves hairy and toothed

Locally abundant, mainly in Co. Cork, established and increasing.

**In 3 species the flowers are in spikes and the main stem ends in a flower**

**Veronica serpyllifolia**  
Thyme-leaved Speedwell

- Stems creeping at base, then ascending
- Flowers 5-6mm, pale blue with 4 uneven petals
- Leaves short stalked and not toothed

Roadsides, waste ground

**Veronica arvensis**  
Wall Speedwell

- Stems erect
- Flowers 2-4mm, bright blue
- Hairy
- Leaves coarsely toothed

Bare ground, walls

**Veronica peregrina**  
American Speedwell

- Stems erect
- Flowers whitish
- Hairless
- Leaves almost entire

Cultivated ground
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In 3 species the flowers are in spikes and the main stem ends in a tuft of hairy leaves. These species occur in dry habitats

- **Veronica officinalis**  
  - Heath Speedwell  
  - Flowers 6-8mm, pale lilac-blue  
  - Leaves oval and tapered at base with very shallow teeth

- **Veronica chamaedrys**  
  - Germander Speedwell  
  - Flowers 10-12mm, bright blue with a white eye  
  - Leaves oblong and coarsely toothed  
  - Main stem hairy in two opposite rows

- **Veronica montana**  
  - Wood Speedwell  
  - Flowers 7-9mm, pale lilac  
  - Leaves oblong and coarsely toothed  
  - Main stem hairy all around

Grasslands

Hedgerows, grassland, woodland

Damp woodlands
In 4 species the flowers are in spikes and the main stem ends in a tuft of hairless leaves. These species occur in wet habitats.

**Veronica beccabunga**
Brooklime
- Flowers 7-8mm, blue
- Oval, bluntly toothed leaves

**Veronica scutellata**
Marsh Speedwell
- Flowers 6-7mm, pale blue-white with dark lines
- Flowering spikes arise singly on alternative sides of stem
- Long lanceolate leaves

**Veronica anagallis-aquatica**
Water Speedwell
- Flowers 6mm, pale blue
- Flowering spikes in opposite pairs
- Long lanceolate leaves

**Veronica catenata**
Pink Water-speedwell
Like *V. anagallis-aquatica* but with pale pink flowers and petal veins that do not reach the petal edge.