

Aquilegia canadensis

Aquilegia canadensis L.

Eastern red columbine, Wild red columbine

Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)

Synonym(s): *Aquilegia australis*, *Aquilegia canadensis* var. *australis*, *Aquilegia canadensis* var. *coccinea*, *Aquilegia canadensis* var. *eminens*, *Aquilegia canadensis* var. *hybrida*, *Aquilegia canadensis* var. *latiuscula*, *Aquilegia coccinea*, *Aquilegia latiuscula*, *Aquilegia phoenicantha*

USDA Symbol: AQCA

USDA Native Status: L48 (N), CAN (N)



This is an erect, branching perennial, up to 2 ft. tall, well-known for its showy flowers. A nodding, red and yellow flower with upward spurred petals alternating with spreading, colored sepals and numerous yellow stamens hanging below the petals.

The compound leaves, divided into round-lobed threes, are attractive in their own right.

This beautiful woodland wildflower has showy, drooping, bell-like flowers equipped with distinctly backward-pointing tubes, similar to the garden Columbines. These tubes, or spurs, contain nectar that attracts long-tongued insects and hummingbirds especially adapted for reaching the sweet secretion. It is reported that Native Americans rubbed the crushed seeds on the hands of men as a love charm. European Columbine (*A. vulgaris*), with blue, violet, pink, or white short-spurred flowers, was introduced from Europe and has now become well established in many parts of the East. *Aquilegia canadensis* readily hybridizes with the popular Southwestern yellow columbines (*A. chrysanthia*, etc.), yielding some striking yellow-and-red color combinations in the flowers. This genus has been referred to as the flower for the masses. Once started, Columbine propagates for years and, although perennial, increases rapidly by self seeding. (Andy Fyon)

The genus name *Aquilegia* comes from the Latin *aquila* which means eagle and refers to the spurred petals that many believe resemble an eagles talons.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS

Duration: Perennial

Habit: Herb

Root Type: Tap

Leaf Retention: Semi-evergreen

Size Notes: Normally 20 to 30 inches.

Leaf: Green to blue-green.

Flower: Flowers 2 inches long.

Fruit: Tan

Size Class: 1-3 ft.

BLOOM INFORMATION

Bloom Color: Red , Pink , Yellow

Bloom Time: Feb , Mar , Apr , May , Jun , Jul

DISTRIBUTION

USA: AL , AR , CT , DC , DE , FL , GA , IA , IL , IN , KS , KY , MA , MD , ME , MI , MN , MO , MS , NC , ND , NE , NH , NJ , NY , OH , OK , PA , RI , SC , SD , TN , TX , VA , VT , WI , WV

Canada: MB , NB , NS , ON , QC , SK

Native Distribution: North America east of the Rockies. From Manitoba and Saskatchewan to Ontario and Quebec, south through much of the eastern US. Disjunct populations in central Texas.

Native Habitat: Partly shaded to shaded woodland habitat with calcareous soils that are not too rich. Central Texas populations primarily in solution-pitted limestone areas in shade.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Water Use: Low , Medium

Light Requirement: Part Shade , Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry , Moist

Soil pH: Alkaline (pH>7.2) , Circumneutral (pH 6.8-7.2)

Drought Tolerance: High

Cold Tolerant: yes

Heat Tolerant: yes

Soil Description: Sandy, well-drained soils. Medium Loam, Sandy Loam, Sandy, Limestone-based. Not too rich.

Conditions Comments: Red columbine likes moisture but must be in well drained soil. Rich garden soil encourages rank vegetative growth and weak stems and shortens the plants lifespan, while plants in thin, sandy soils maintain a tight, compact habit and can live for many years. It is evergreen unless the temperature exceeds 110 degrees F or -10 degrees F, which will cause the leaves to go dormant until the temperature returns to a more tolerable level. Do not plant in continuous full sun, as growth will be stunted and leaves may burn.

BENEFIT

Use Ornamental: Valued as a shade-loving perennial with attractive foliage and eye-catching blooms. Also does well as a saucerless pot plant.

Use Wildlife: Blooms attract hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and hawk moths. Seeds consumed by finches and buntings.

Use Other: Native American men reputedly rubbed crushed seeds on themselves to attract amorous attention.

Conspicuous Flowers: yes

Interesting Foliage: yes

Attracts: Birds , Butterflies , Hummingbirds

Nectar Source: yes

Deer Resistant: Moderate

PROPAGATION

Propagation Material: Seeds

Description: Most easily propagated by seed because mature rootstocks are difficult to divide and transplant. Seeds may be sown immediately after collection or stored and given a cold-moist treatment. Sow seed in fall as soon as temperature drops and in spring before the worst heat. Will germinate in summer, but not as well and plants struggle more. Sow by just scattering on the surface and lightly tamping. Seedlings will flower the second year following germination.

Seed Collection: Flowers go to seed approximately 2 weeks after emerging.

Seed Treatment: Cold-moist stratify for 3-4 weeks at 40 degrees or below.

Commercially Avail: yes

Maintenance: Be careful of overwatering in summer - the crowns can rot. Cut back old seed heads and stems in summer to keep tidy looking. To maintain pure strains of any *Aquilegia* species and prevent hybridizing (which *A. canadensis* will readily do), keep different species widely separated - not a surefire protection, but reduces the likelihood.

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS OF NORTH AMERICA (BAMONA)

Aquilegia canadensis is a larval host and/or nectar source for:

Columbine Duskywing

(*Erynnis lucilus*)



Larval Host

Learn more at BAMONA

SOURCE: http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=AQCA