

Crassulaceae

stonecrop family

Mainly northern, this family is represented in Nova Scotia by only a few species out of a total of 300. They are succulent herbaceous plants, bearing small yellow, white or pink flowers. Sepals and petals are five-merous; stamens number twice as many as the petals. Pistils 3–5; fruit is a follicle. Best-known as rock garden ornamentals, we have a single native species. (Key adapted from Go Botany).

Key to genera

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| A. Plants annual; aquatic or amphibious; flowers solitary; leaves connate around the stem. | <i>Crassula</i> |
| aa. Plants perennial; terrestrial; flowers usually in cymes; leaves not as above. | B |
| B. Leaves entire; plants matted with creeping stems. | <i>Sedum</i> |
| bb. Leaves toothed; plants with upright stems, which may be decumbent at the base, or from stolons. | C |
| C. Flowers unisexual, 4-merous; fertile stems from axils of brown scalelike leaves from fibrous roots. | <i>Rhodiola</i> |
| cc. Flowers bisexual, 5-merous; fertile stems from roots or stolons. | D |
| D. Plants mat-forming from creeping horizontal stems; leaves opposite. | <i>Phedimus</i> |
| dd. Plants not forming mats; leaves alternate, opposite or whorled. | <i>Hylotelephium</i> |

***Crassula* L.**

Cosmopolitan in distribution, of the 250 species only one reaches NS. Most are succulent, their leaves opposite. One species of Africa known in horticulture as the Jade Plant, is a *Crassula*.

***Crassula aquatica* (L.) Schonl.**

Pigmyweed; tillée aquatique

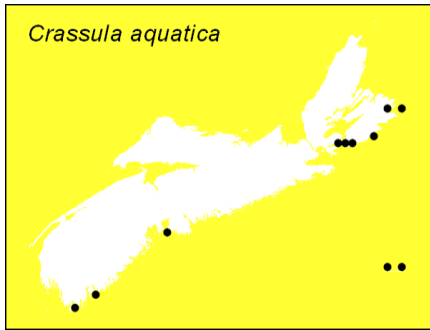


Photo by Sean Blaney

A tiny tufted annual, it rarely exceeds 10cm in height. It is mat-forming with small sessile, linear and opposite leaves. Flowers are solitary and axillary, barely 1mm wide.

Flowers from July to September.

Habitat preferences are narrow: brackish muddy shores and sand flats or borders of muddy ponds along the coast.



Known from several Atlantic coastal localities, from Shelburne Co. to Cape Breton Co., including Sable Island.

Ranges from NL to ON and southward to MN and MD; southward; Pacific coast; Europe and North Africa.

***Hylotelephium* H. Ohba**

Includes about 30 species of North America, Africa and Asia. Formerly included in *Sedum*, these species have now been separated on the basis of monoecy and erect habit.

***Hylotelephium telephium* (L.) Ohba (=*Sedum telephium* L.)**

Live-forever; orpine pourpre



Photo by Sean Blaney

Coarse erect succulent plants, this species may reach 50cm in height. Branching from the base, the stems and alternate leaves are glaucous. Leaves may appear to spiral the stem. Fleshy, they are sparingly toothed along the margins. Flowers are numerous and densely packed, ranging from creamy white to magenta or deep purple. Plants are monoecious

Flowers July and August.

Naturalized in shady areas in fertile soils.

Scattered from Yarmouth to Cape Breton.

NS to SK, south to MS; various other locations. A European introduction.



Photo by Andy Dean

Phedimus Raf.

Formerly included with *Sedum*, these species have now been segregated on the basis of creeping growth habit. A single introduction is found in NS, thriving after cultivation in coastal areas.

***Phedimus spurius* (M. Bieb.) 't Hart.**

(=*Sedum spurium* M. Bieb.)

Caucasian Stonecrop; Garden Stonecrop; orpin bâtard

A coarse perennial, it roots from the vegetative stems, forming large patches. Only the flowering stems are erect, to 20cm tall and bearing flat ovate leaves in whorls on the stem. Flowers are pink, about 1cm wide, crowded in a corymb 5–7cm wide.

Flowers throughout the summer.

Generally roadside or along stone walls, where soil is rocky.

Many coastal locations from Yarmouth east to Halifax and Pictou counties.

Elsewhere its distribution has not been recorded.

Rhodiola L.

It is a genus of plants of the northern regions of North America, Asia and Europe and in southern areas at higher elevations. Our single species is a native perennial. Plants are unisexual, the only species in the family to exhibit dioecy.

***Rhodiola rosea* L.**

(=*Sedum rosea* L.)

Roseroot; orpine rose



Photo by Martin Thomas

A dioecious species, it branches from the base of the plant, arising from a scaly crown. Leaves are alternate or whorled and acutely pointed. Inflorescence is terminal and crowded, rarely more than 3cm wide. Staminate flowers are greenish yellow; pistillate ones are plump, erect and purplish.

Flowers June and July.



Photo by Marian Munro

Coastal crevices, seashore cliffs, maritime.

Scattered along the Bay of Fundy from Brier Island inland. Not common on the Atlantic coast. Scattered through the Cobequids and common on northern Cape Breton. Essentially a maritime distribution.

Ranges from Greenland, NF to NU, south to PA; NC.

***Sedum* L.** **stonecrops**

Of 400 species, we have a single species, found here as a garden escape. All have succulent leaves and showy clusters of flowers. Stamens number twice as many as petals.

***Sedum acre* L.**

Mossy Stonecrop; Yellow Orpine; orpin âcre



Photo by Marian Munro

A low-growing mat-forming perennial, its tangled stems creep to 10cm. The round succulent leaves are tiny, 2–5mm long. Sulphur yellow flowers are terminal in small cymes. Currently used as a species of choice for green roofs.

Flowers June and July.

Escaped from cultivation and naturalized locally on cliff edges, walls, rocky outcrops, sometimes in dense patches but not spreading.

Becoming frequent along the Atlantic coast and scattered to Cape Breton.

Ranges from NF to SK, south to CO and NC; FL; west coast. From Eurasia.



Photo by Martin Thomas