

Oxalidaceae

wood-sorrel family

Nearly cosmopolitan, 900 species are known, in 7–8 genera. Leaves are compound and mostly basal, often divided into three leaflets or alternate along the stem. The inflorescence is a cyme or umbel, or solitary. Five-merous, each flower is perfect and regular. Petals are distinct and the stamens borne in two whorls. Outer stamens may be glandular at the base. The ovary has five locules, each with at least two ovules. Fruit is a septate capsule.

Oxalis L.

wood-sorrels

Most of the family is included here. Stamens are arranged in two series, the outer whorl is shorter. Leaves are divided into three obcordate leaflets. Most are perennial.

Key to species

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| A. Leafy stem absent; leaves basal; flowers white to purple. | <i>Oxalis montana</i> |
| aa. Petals with a leafy stem; leaves alternate; flowers yellow. | B |
| B. Plants rhizomatous; stipules lacking; hairs on the stem jointed and blunt. | <i>O. stricta</i> |
| bb. Plants stoloniferous; stipules prominent; hairs on the stem not jointed, pointed. | C |
| C. Stem ascending or reclining, not creeping; seeds with white ridges. | <i>O. dillenii</i> |
| cc. Stem creeping and rooting; seeds brown. | <i>O. corniculata</i> |

Oxalis corniculata L.

Creeping Wood-sorrel; oxalide cornue



Photo by Martin Thomas

Its creeping stems bear puberulent estipulate petioles.. Leaves may be purplish and are small, about 4–21mm wide. Yellow petals may be marked with nectar guides.

Flowers as early as April, often until November.

Waste soils and gardens, near greenhouses. An introduced plant with low invasive potential.

So far reported from Truro, Wolfville, and Kentville.

Known from most provinces and states. Introduced in Canada.

***Oxalis dillenii* Jacq.**
oxalide du Dillenius



Photo by Jean and Sean Timpa

Forming colonial mats, this species is less common than *O. stricta*, and its capsules are much more exerted, extending to 2.5cm. Stems range from green to dark-brown, bearing appressed pubescence. Inflorescence is an umbel of 1–5 flowers. Pedicels in fruit, are descending, but the capsules are held erect. The white markings across the capsules require a hand-lens to see.

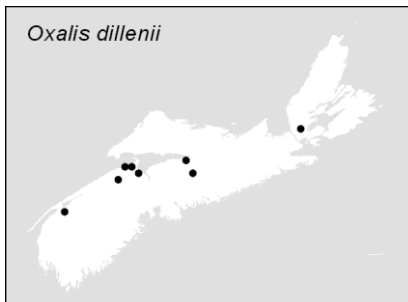
Fallow ground and in clearings.

Northern in NS, from Annapolis County to Antigonish Co.

NS to AB, southward. Absent from MB. Introduced here.



Photo by Jean and Sean Timpa



Oxalis montana* Raf.*(*O. acetosella* auct. non L.)****Wood-sorrel; oxalide de montagne***Photo by Sean Blaney*

Leaves are all basal and long-petiolate, the petioles villous. Leaflets are three, broadly obcordate. Solitary flowers arise on long slender peduncles, softly puberulent and extending well above the leaves. Petals are white, bearing faint violet nectar guides, slightly mucronate. Peduncles bear a pair of tiny bracts midway along their length.

Flowers from early June through July.

Damp, mossy woods, banks, treed swamps and in seepy ravines.

Common throughout.

Ranges from NF to ON, south to TN and GA.

*Photo by David Mazerolle****Oxalis stricta* L.****Yellow Wood-sorrel; oxalide d'Europe***Photo by Sean Blaney*

Purplish stems may be ascending or reclining, but never creeping. Arising from a pubescent rhizome, the plants may reach 40cm in height. Leaves are borne in irregular whorls, their petioles at most puberulent. Inflorescence is solitary and terminal, the flowers arranged in a cyme. Capsules 8–12mm, glabrous or softly hairy.

Flowers from May until frost.



Photo by Martin Thomas

Tolerates a wide variety of habitats, where the soil is open and disturbed.

Common throughout.

Cosmopolitan, and probably native to this continent.
Introduced into Canada.