

## Papaveraceae

### Poppy Family

Mostly herbaceous, only three of 25 genera reach Nova Scotia. They are typified by the acrid latex contained within, which may be variously coloured. Leaves are alternate and lobed, or toothed. Regular flowers are usually showy, comprising 2–3 sepals, enclosing many stamens and up to 12 petals. They are singly carried atop a peduncle. Fruit is a unilocular capsule, further divided into as many as 20 valves.

#### Key to species

- A. Petals >8; cauline leaves absent, basal leaf 1; native perennial. *Sanguinaria*
- aa. Petals 4 or 6; cauline leaves present; introduced annual or biennial. B
  - B. Inflorescence an umbel; flowers yellow, small. *Chelidonium*
  - bb. Inflorescence a single flower, usually red, purple or white. *Papaver*

### ***Chelidonium* L.**

#### **Celandine**

A monotypic genus, originating in Asia, the plants contain a saffron-coloured latex, desirable as a stain or dye. Plants are branching, a feature not common amongst the poppy genera.

#### ***Chelidonium majus* L.**

#### **Celandine, Swallow-wort; grande chélidoine**



Photo by Ross Hall

A tall plant, reaching 80cm, it releases an orange latex when bruised. Leaves are pinnately divided, nearly to the midrib. Lobes are ovate and broadly toothed. Small yellow flowers are borne in an umbel producing slender capsules 3–5cm long.

Summer flowering, July and August.

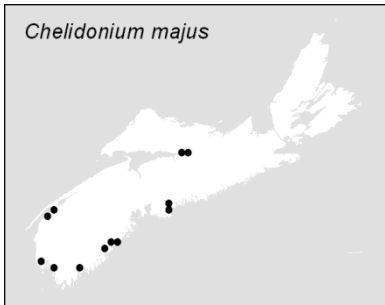
Disturbed soils and old gardens.



Photo by Ross Hall

Naturalized about towns and settlements: Point Pleasant Park and various gardens in Halifax. Southern counties; Truro.

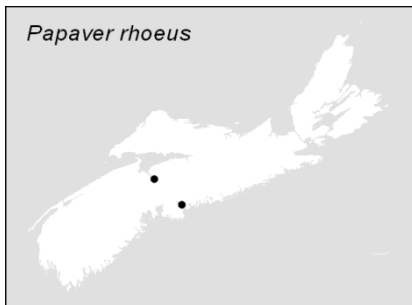
Elsewhere it is found from NS to MB, variously south to GA; western. Introduced from Europe as a source of dye.



***Papaver* L.**  
**Poppies**

Treasured ornamentals, the poppies have been naturalised on all continents, but for South America. None are native to Nova Scotia, but occasionally several will persist casually. Single flowers grace tall slender peduncles. Usually red or salmon, there are four petals.

***Papaver rhoeas* L.**  
**Corn Poppy; Shirley Poppy; grand coquelicot**



Flowers have a bright red corolla with dark centres. Plants appear to be bristly. Leaves and stem are glaucous.

Summer-flowering.

Persists on disturbed and compact soil.

Collections from Amherst, Pictou, Sydney and Halifax. Reported from near ports in the northern counties.

Widely distributed across North America after introduction from Europe.

Very occasionally the yellow-flowered California Poppy, *Eschscholzia californica* Chamisso is seen, as at Cheticamp. They are introduced from the American southwest.

***Sanguinaria* L.**  
**Bloodroot**

Another monotypic genus, this one is limited to North America. Bloodroot is both perennial and colonial. Its graceful dark-green leaves embrace a single delicate white flower, a fleeting beauty in early spring.

The thick rhizomes exude an acrid latex, approaching the colour of blood. Leaves are palmately lobed and widely crenate, arising on long petioles.

***Sanguinaria canadensis* L.**  
**Bloodroot; sanguinaire du Canada**



*Photo by Eugene Quigley*



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

Leaves persist throughout the summer, forming a lacy green carpet. They are round and deeply cleft, with scalloped margins. White flowers produce a capsule, 3–5cm long.

Look for flowers in early May.

Streamside or on alluvial terraces, in the shade, just above high water.

Rare in Kings and Hants counties. Common in Colchester Co.; scattered from Cumberland County to Cape Breton.

NS to MB, south to FL and TX.