

## Polygalaceae milkwort family

Cosmopolitan in scope, there are about 750 species worldwide; two reach Nova Scotia. Ours are herbs with alternate or whorled leaves and clustered flowers, aggregated into racemes. Sepals number five, in two whorls. Outer three sepals are small, while the inner two are larger, resembling petals. Three petals are united to form a corolla tube. Lowermost petals are keeled, with a ciliate crest. Seeds are covered by a thick aril.

### ***Polygala* L.** milkworts

As above.

Key to species

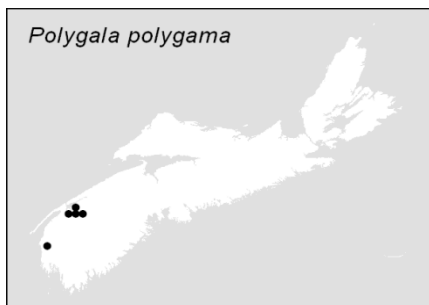
Biennial, arising from a thickened root, freely branching from the base;  
leaves 2–7mm wide; cleistogamous flowers present.

*Polygala polygama*

Annual; stem solitary from a small root; leaves 1.5mm wide;  
cleistogamous flowers absent.

*P. sanguinea*

### ***Polygala polygama* Walt.** Bitter Milkwort; polygala polygame



Most of the branches arising from the base, where they may be finely pubescent. Leaves are linear or oblanceolate, margins entire.

Flowers from June to September.

Grows in dry, open soil.

Uncommon in Annapolis and Digby counties.

Ranges from NS to ON, south to TX and FL. Its conservation status remains undetermined at this time.

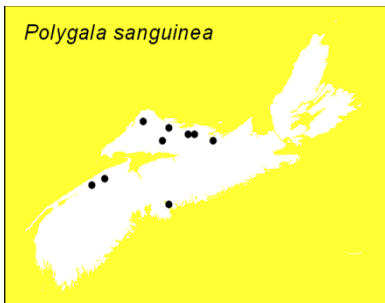
***Polygala sanguinea* L.**  
**Blood Milkwort; polygala sanguin**



*Photo by David Mazerolle*



*Photo by Chris Hawkins*



An erect plant, sparingly branched at the top. Slender elliptic leaves arise along the stem. The inflorescence is a tight cylinder, 1–2cm long, of magenta or rose-pink flowers. It is annual in habit.

Flowering from late June into October.

Prefers acidic or run-out soil as found in fallow fields or brushlands,

Collected from Annapolis to Halifax and Cumberland counties. Documented from Shearwater and Burnside, Halifax Co.; also recorded from Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland and Kings counties. Populations are usually scant.

Ranges from NS to ON, south to NM and GA.