

## Santalaceae

### sandalwood family

Cosmopolitan in distribution, the family counts about 400 species of parasitic plants. Only two species reach Nova Scotia, both perennials parasitic on the roots of other vascular plants. Leaves are simple, entire or reduced to bracts. Perfect flowers are variously arranged, all unisexual with 4–tepals, forming a tube. Stamens of equal number, opposing the tepals. A nectary disk sits atop the ovary. Fruit is a nut or drupe with a single seed.

Inflorescence a terminal cyme or panicle; hypanthium visible.

*Comandra*

Inflorescence axillary cymes; hypanthium absent.

*Geocaulon*

### ***Comandra* Nutt.**

#### **Bastard toadflax**

Only two species comprise this genus, one North American. Short in stature, these glabrous perennials, are rhizomatous. Flowers are perfect, the hypanthium well-developed. Nectary is shallowly lobed at the top, alternating with the stamens. Five tepals each bear a tuft of hair adherent to the stamens. Flowers and leaves are both small and inconspicuous. Leaves are alternate.

#### ***Comandra umbellata* (L.) Nutt.**

##### **Bastard Toadflax; comandre à ombelle**

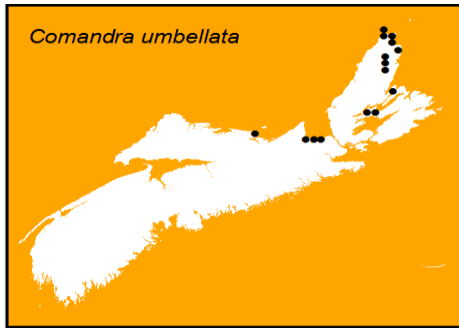


*Photo by David Mazerolle*

Leaves are ovate and alternate along branching stems. Yellow flowers are small and simple, arranged in terminal inflorescences. Fruit is a dry nut. Ours is the typical ssp. *umbellata*

Grows in damp sands, as on headlands, in barrens, dunes and evergreen forests.

Rare and local in northern Cape Breton; common at Pomquet, Antigonish Co.



Ranges across Canada, south to the Gulf. Absent only in FL and LA.

***Geocaulon* Fern.  
false toadflax**

Monotypic, this species has axillary flowers, three per cluster. Usually the lateral pair are functionally staminate, soon deciduous after anthesis. Fruit is a fleshy drupe.

***Geocaulon lividum* (Richards.) Fern.  
False Toadflax; comandre livide**



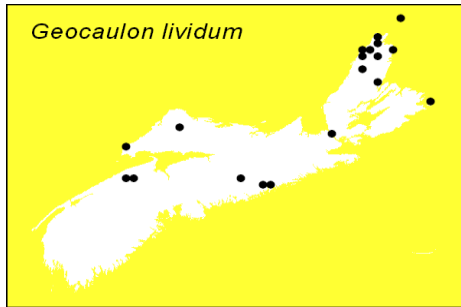
Photo by Sean Blaney

It resembles *Comandra* but for the axillary flowers arising midway along the stem, and juicy fruits.

Flowers from late May to early August.

Damp sands and other sterile soils, especially in acid or peaty sites.

Disjunct sites in Halifax, Kings and Cumberland counties;



widespread but local in Cape Breton.

Ranges across Canada south to NY and ID.