

## Cistaceae

### rock-rose family

A family of low shrubs or wiry herbs, there are only 200 or so species worldwide in eight genera. Leaves are entire and simple, and usually alternately arranged. Perfect flowers are hypogynous and regular, but for the calyx, which has two reduced sepals. Stamens vary in number. The fruit is a capsule, dehiscent to its base.

#### Key to genera

- A. Plants low shrubs, freely branching; leaves 1–6mm long, imbricate. *Hudsonia*
- aa. Plants herbs, wiry; leaves 10–30mm long, not imbricate. B
  - B. Petals 5, showy, yellow; capsules of 2 sizes; with stellate pubescence. *Helianthemum*
  - bb. Petals 3, minute, purplish, capsules small of equal size; simple pubescence. *Lechea*

### *Helianthemum* Mill.

#### rock-rose

There are nearly 100 species of rock-roses and they may be perennial herbs or small shrubs. One reaches Nova Scotia, but is of a very limited distribution. Flowers are five-merous. The outer sepals are much narrower and shorter than the inner three. Cleistogamous flowers may develop later in the season; these are without petals and have 4–6 stamens. Regular flowers produce up to 50 stamens.

#### *Helianthemum canadense* (L.) Michx.

##### Canadian Rock-rose; hélianthème du Canada



Photo by Martin Thomas

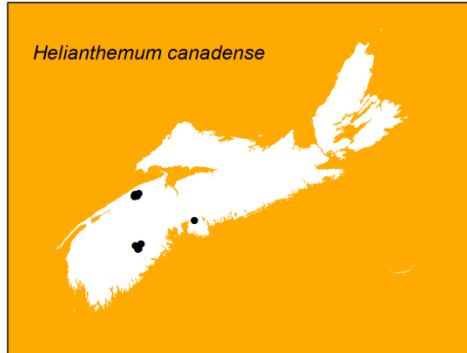
Puberulent like the next species, but the hairs are star-shaped. Leaves are more pronounced, lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, arising from reddish stems. Flowers are terminal, single or in pairs, showy with yellow petals, 2–4cm wide.

Flowers from June into July.

Sand barrens and open dry areas of lacustrine shorelines.



Photo by Ruth Newell



*Helianthemum canadense*

Very rare and local and only in small numbers. Around Kingston, Green Acres and Greenwood, Kings Co. and Greenfield, Queens County. Also most recently near Maplesue Point, Ponhook Lake in the same county. Historically known from Five Island Lake, Halifax Co.

Ranges from NS: QC to ON, south to MO, AL and GA.

### ***Hudsonia* L. hudsonia**

Small freely branching shrubs, they resemble heather and rarely exceed 30cm in height. Usually found in patches they are especially showy when in flower. Single yellow flowers are terminal on short branches. Evergreen in habit, both of the two known species are present in Nova Scotia and both are of conservation concern.

#### Key to species

Flowers borne on naked, pedicels; leaves linear 3–6mm long; spreading or loosely appressed; plants greenish, sparingly villous.

*Hudsonia ericoides*

Flowers sessile or nearly so, leaves 1–3mm long, tightly appressed; plants densely white-tomentose.

*H. tomentosa*

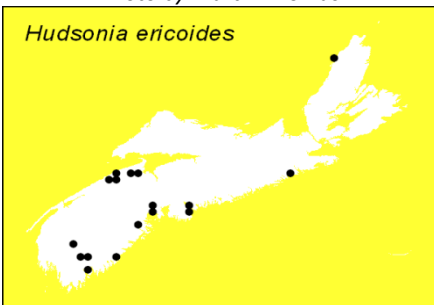
***Hudsonia ericoides* L.**  
**Hudsonia**



Photo by Martin Thomas



Photo by Martin Thomas



Compact and freely branching, this evergreen grows in colonial patches 20–60cm wide. The linear leaves overlap along the stem. Close to the ground they are blackened and persistent. Flowers are terminal.

Late May to early in July.

Sand barrens and other areas where the soil is dry and rocky, as at Jack Pine barrens at Williams Lake, Halifax Co.

Ranges from Shelburne to Halifax counties along the Atlantic shore and known from several localities through the centre of the Annapolis Valley. Only a single Cape Breton locality.

NF, PE, NS and southern ME along the coastal plain to DE; SC.

***Hudsonia tomentosa* Nutt.**  
**Woolly Hudsonia**



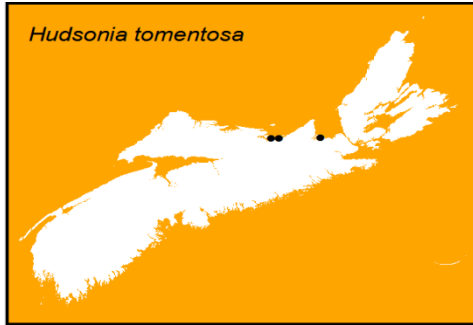
Photo by Sean Blaney

Leaves are deltate, rather than linear and scale-like, tightly appressed along the stems. The white tomentum of this plant is most distinctive.

Flowers May to July.

Limited to sandy coasts and dune-slacks.

Rare in Nova Scotia, found only along the Northumberland shore between Pictou and Merigomish.



Elsewhere from NS to NT and variously south to IA, IL and NC.

STATUS: ORANGE-listed for NS.

## ***Lechea* L. pinweed**

North American in distribution, there are about 20 species across the continent. Ours is a small herb, with minute flowers and nondescript leaves. It is more noticeable once the round capsules have matured.

### ***Lechea intermedia* Leggett Pinweed**



Photo by David Mazerolle

A finely pubescent species, its leaves are alternate and linear to narrowly oblanceolate. Tiny flowers are numerous and arranged in a panicle, its length at least one-third that of the entire plant. Individual flowers are globose or cup-shaped.

Two varieties are present. In addition to the typical variety, var. *juniperina* (Bickn.) Robin. is found in NS. Differing from var. *intermedia* in that its inner sepals are narrowly ovate and pointed, exceeding the capsule in length. It has been found in the northern part of the province and along the Atlantic coast. Sepals of the typical variety are broadly ovate.

Flowers from July until November.

Dry open woods and in fallow fields, mostly where soils are sandy and rocky.

Scattered throughout.

Grows from Cape Breton, west to SK, south to WY and VA.