

## Geraniaceae

### geranium family

Long-known for the prized ornamentals and house plants obtained from South African species. Nova Scotia hosts two genera and a half-dozen species. Most are herbs with lobed or compound leaves. Cauline leaves are opposite. Flower parts are in fives or multiples of fives. An outer whorl of sterile stamens may be present. Pistil has a single style, the stigmas distinct. Typically a beak covers the column of the style formed by an elongation of the carpels, and splitting at maturity, each carpel releasing a single seed. (schizocarp).

#### Key to genera

Leaves palmately compound or lobed; most with 10 fertile stamens. *Geranium*

Leaves pinnately compound or lobed; fertile stamens 5. *Erodium*

### ***Erodium* L.**

#### **stork's bill**

Best developed in the Mediterranean or Middle Eastern regions, with about 75 species described. One species has been introduced to NS. It differs from our other genus in having the beak of the carpel completely separating from the column and persisting as an awn. Seeds are smooth. Basal leaves are dissected and toothed. Flowers usually pink or purple, borne in cymes.

#### ***Erodium cicutarium* (L.) L'Her.**

##### **Stork's-bill**



Photo by Andy Dean

Plants arise on ascending pubescent stems. Leaves are coarsely oblong, pinnately divided into numerous toothed leaflets. Basal leaves crowded, borne on long petioles. Cauline leaves are more distant and sessile. Flowers are small, purple and carried in cymes of up to eight flowers. Fruit may reach 4 cm in length.

Flowers June through to September.

Grows in sandy cultivated or disturbed soils.

Scattered collections from Halifax, Kings counties to Antigonish. Collected in 2014 from Greenwood, Kings Co.

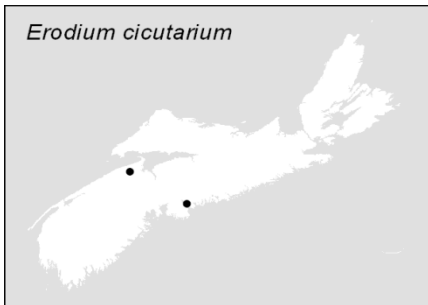
Found throughout North America; introduced.



Photo by Andy Dean



Photo by Sean Blaney



## **Geranium L.** **wild geranium; crane's-bill**

Nearly 300 species are included, all producing white, pink or purple flowers in pairs. *Geranium* differs from *Erodium* in having the carpel beaks remaining attached to the stylar column by their tips. Capsules are dehiscent, sometimes ventrally, or indehiscent.

### Key to species

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| A. Rhizomatous; perennial; petals 12–20mm long; anthers 2mm or longer.  | <i>Geranium pratense</i> |
| aa. Not rhizomatous, arising from a taproot; annual or short-lived perennial; petals <12mm; anthers equal to or less than 1mm.                                | B                        |
| B. Leaves compound; leaflets petiolate; carpel bodies separating from stylar beak at maturity, but remaining attached by means of 2 long filiform appendages. | <i>G. robertianum</i>    |
| bb. Leaves not compound, but deeply dissected; carpel bodies persistently attached to styles.   | C                        |
| C. Leaves >4cm wide; deeply divided and leaflets further lobed; sepals 6–10mm long, ending in a slender bristle.  | <i>G. bicknellii</i>     |
| cc. Leaves mostly <5cm wide, round in outline, shallowly divided; sepals <4mm long, not ending in a bristle.  | D                        |
| D. Body of carpels rugose; beak of style 2–5mm long.  | <i>G. molle</i>          |

dd. Body of carpels pubescent, not rugose; beak of style absent or very short.

*G. pusillum*

***Geranium bicknellii* Britt.**

**Wild Geranium; géranium de Bicknell**



*Photo by Sean Blaney*



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

The entire plant is pubescent. Leaves are cleft into five deeply incised lobes. Flowers are violet, the slender, awned sepals about equalling the petals in length.

Flowers from late June to July.

Colonizes recently burned or cleared land; recently exposed lakeshores.

Sporadic from southern counties to central Nova Scotia.

NF to AK, variously south to CA and TN.

***Geranium molle* L.**

**Dove's-foot Crane's-bill; géranium mou**

An ascending or erect plant, it freely branches from the base, often reaching 50cm or more. Basal leaves are globose, or kidney-shaped. Cauline leaves are usually trilobed. Calyces and pedicels are densely glandular. Petals mucronate, to 7mm long. Fruits 9–13mm long, glabrous but rugose on the carpel bodies.

Flowers from June to August.

Grows on compact, disturbed soils such as those of lawns.

Reported from only Annapolis and Colchester counties.

Scattered in the east from NS to ON, south to OK and GA; west coast. Introduced.

***Geranium pratense* L.****Meadow Geranium; géranium des prés***Photo by Ross Hall*

Taller than others included here, the stems, petioles, peduncles and fruit are glandular pubescent. Cauline leaves are opposite, deeply incised into 5–7 lobes. Leaves near the base of the plant are borne on long petioles; upper leaves are sessile. Inflorescence is a corymb, with few flowers. Petals lilac to purple.

Flowers June to August.

Roadsides, old gardens, near dwellings. Escape from gardens.

Scattered or occasional throughout.

Ranges from NF to AB, south to MN and PA; European native.

*Photo by Martin Thomas****Geranium pusillum* L.****Small-flowered Crane's-bill; géranium à tige grêle***Photos by Martin Thomas*

Smaller than *G. molle* in stature, it bears distinctive basal leaves. They are long-petiolate and nearly round, shallowly divided into palmate lobes. Leaves reduce in size towards the top of the plant. Flowers are small, their petals ranging only from 2–4mm in length. The outer whorl of stamens is sterile.

Flowers from June through October.

Weedy in lawns and gardens and may become invasive once established.

Local. Reported from Wolfville and Kentville.

From NS to AK, south to CA and GA. Introduced.



***Geranium robertianum* L.**  
**Herb-Robert; géranium de Robert**



*Photo by Martin Thomas*



*Photo by Alain Belliveau*

Stems are villous bearing three-lobed leaves, further pinnately cleft. Leaves are petiolate and puberulent above and below. Pinkish flowers are subtended by a calyx, measuring 9mm tall, constricted at the top. The sepals are ovate, awl-shaped distally.

Flowers June to September.

Usually grows in shady forests, ravines, talus slopes and cobbly beaches.

More prevalent along the northern side, from Digby to Cape Breton; along the Atlantic as far as Queens Co.

Ranges from NF to MB, south to TN; west coast; Eurasia and Africa. Native.