Caryophyllaceae
pink family

A wide-ranging family, there are nearly 2000 herbaceous annuals or perennials included within. They are typified by the opposite or whorled leaves and swollen leaf nodes. Generally the flowers are perfect and often the corolla has five petals which may be cleft. The calyx has five sepals; there are 10 stamens. Fruit is a dry capsule.

Numerous ornamentals are derived from the family; many have been planted in Nova Scotia. Some thrive without cultivation becoming weedy in disturbed soils and others naturalize, but only for a short while.

Key to genera

A. Stipules present, dry, scarious, not green. B
- B. Leaves linear; styles and valves of the capsule 3; flowers white or pink. *Spergularia*
- bb. Leaves filiform, whorled; styles and valves 5; flowers white. *Spergula*

aa. Stipules absent. C
- C. Petals absent; fruit with a single seed. *Scleranthus*
- cc. Petals usually present; capsules with few to many seeds. D
  - D. Plants small and often prostrate; flowers <1cm wide; sepals separate. E
    - E. Capsule cylindrical, slightly curved, opening by a row of small teeth at the summit; plants pubescent. *Cerastium*
    - ee. Capsule oval or oblong; splitting into valves; plants smooth, or with merely a row of hairs down the stem. F
      - F. Leaves filiform; plant tufted; petals shorter than the sepals; styles 4–5. *Sagina*
      - ff. Leaves not filiform; plant erect; petals exceeding sepals; styles 3. G
        - G. Petals cleft or absent; stems soft, quadrangled, diffusely spreading. *Stellaria*
        - gg. Petals not cleft; stems round, wiry and usually erect. H
          - H. Plant fleshy, maritime. *Honckenya*
          - hh. Plant not fleshy nor restricted to saline habitats. I
            - I. Leaves linear to setaceous; capsule with 3 teeth. *Minuartia*
            - ii. Leaves ovate, elliptical or lanceolate; capsule with >3 teeth. J
              - J. Leaves <8mm long; annual. *Arenaria*

jj. Leaves >8mm long; perennial. *Moehringia*

dd. Plants large, erect; sepals united, forming tubular calyx; flowers >1cm wide. K

K. Calyx subtended by an involucre. *Dianthus*

kk. Calyx without an involucre. L

L.Styles 3 or 5. M

M. Calyx lobes exceeding the tube; petals without appendages. *Agrostemma*

mm. Calyx lobes much shorter than the tube; petals with appendages. N

N. Capsule with 5 teeth; styles 5; flowers perfect. *Lychnis*

nn. Capsule with twice the number of teeth as styles; both staminate and pistillate flowers present. *Silene*

ll. Styles 2. O

O. Petals with claw and blade, appendages conspicuous; calyx with 20 veins. *Saponaria*

oo. Petals without appendages; calyx with 5 veins. *Vaccaria*

Agrostemma L.
Corn-cockle

Comprised of only two Eurasian annuals, one has been introduced into Nova Scotia. Formerly a contaminant in crop now seen in wildflower seed mixtures, although not persisting in native habitats. The calyx-lobes greatly exceed the length of the calyx-tube, which is also coarsely ribbed. Corollas are five-merous; stamens 10. Capsule is dehiscent and contains five valves.

Agrostemma githago L.
Corn-cockle, nielle des blés

Reaching upwards of 1m, plant has few branches. Leaves are narrowly lanceolate. Flowers are solitary and showy, ranging from magenta to purple. Calyx-lobes are longer than the petals and sepals are covered in white tomentum.

Flowers from June to September.

Habitat seems to be grain fields, roadsides and meadows planted with flower seed mixtures. Becoming infrequent over time as seed used is cleaner.

Sporadically reported and seen on Brier Island. Collected from Kings and Cumberland counties.

Widely established on the continent. Introduced from Europe.

Arenaria L.
Sandworts

Diffuse, herbaceous plants, the sandworts have weak stems and opposite sessile leaves. Plants are often puberulent. Small white flowers are pedicellate, arranged in small bracteate panicles. Sepals are separate and acuminate, five, subtending five shorter, entire petals. Stamens 10, styles half as many. Fruit is a capsule containing many seeds, exceeding the length of the sepals and dehiscent by six teeth.

Arenaria serpyllifolia L.
Thyme-leaved Sandwort; sabline à feuilles de serpolet

Photo by Sean Blaney

A delicate plant with acute, ovate leaves. The inflorescence is widely diffuse; the flowers arise halfway along the height of the plant.

May flower as early as April, until August.

Frequently found in compact sterile soils, as along roadsides and oldfields.

Kings and Hants counties, especially along the railways. Also reported from Summerville, Queens Co.

Introduced to most of the continent; a native of Eurasia.

Cerastium L
chickweeds

Annual or perennial, all 100 species of this genus are herbaceous. They are typified by their opposite pairs of small leaves. Stipules are absent. Flowers have bilobed petals. Ours are generally of disturbed soils, such as lawns, roadsides, meadows. All are introduced or adventive from Eurasia.

Key to species

A. Plants perennial.	B
B. Plants densely white-tomentose.	*Cerastium tomentosum*
bb. Plants green, smooth or pubescent.	C
C. Petals equal to or shorter than the sepals.	*C. fontanum*
cc. Petals 10mm long, much-exceeding the sepals and showy; mat forming.	*C. arvense*
aa. Plants annual.	
D. Petals equal to or longer than the sepals; cleft 1–1.5mm.	*C. pumilum*
dd. Petals shorter than the sepals, divided less than 1mm.	*C. semidecandrum*

Cerastium arvense L.
Field Chickweed; céraiste des champs

Photo by Ross Hall

A more compact plant than the next species, it rarely reaches 40cm. Its leaves are lanceolate with small leafy branches arising from the axils. Petals greatly exceed the length of the sepals. Smooth to pubescent eglandular plants belong to ssp. *arvense* while ssp. *trictum* (L) Ugborogho includes small plants covered with glandular pubescence. This western variety has been collected from Blomidon and St. Paul Island. Not reported since the 1950s.

Early-flowering, in June.

Fields and roadsides.

Scattered and locally abundant, Port Williams and Canard, Kings Co. and Truro. Uncommon from Lunenburg to Cumberland, Pictou and Antigonish counties.

Widespread throughout the northern hemisphere.

***Cerastium fontanum* Baumg.**
(*C. vulgatum* L.)
Mouse-ear Chickweed; céraiste des fontaines


Photo by Martin Thomas


Photo by Martin Thomas

Robust and sprawling the plant may reach 60cm in height, or length. Plants are covered with coarse pubescence and may be freely branched from the base. Leaves are oblong or ovate, pubescent on both surfaces. Our material is included as ssp. *vulgare* (Hartm.) Greuter & Burdet. Flowers are not showy; the sepals and petals are of equal lengths.

May until frost.

Compacted soils, especially on moist lawns and other arable land.

Common through NS and temperate North America.

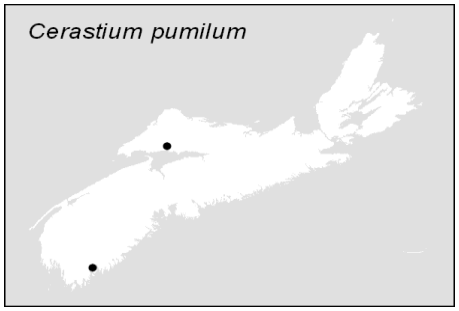
***Cerastium pumilum* W. Curtis**
céraiste nain


Photo by Sean Blaney

This is a compact plant with small leaves similar to the next species, but without the stickiness. The bracts subtending the inflorescence have inconspicuous scarious margins. Petals may slightly exceed the sepals. Seeds are papillose.

Early-flowering.

Photo by Martin Thomas

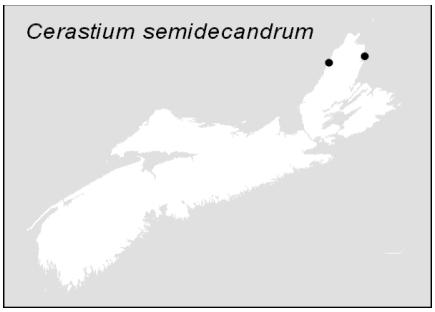


Disturbed and compacted soils.

Known from several parks and campgrounds of Shelburne, Annapolis and Yarmouth counties.

Ranges from NS to ON, variously south to TX; BC. Probably overlooked.

Cerastium semidecandrum L.
céraiste à cinq étamines



An annual species, it is viscid in texture and pubescent. Plants are compact and less than 20cm in height. Small leaves are oblanceolate at the base of the plant, while the cauline leaves are ovate. Pedicels are longer than the sepals, nodding in fruit. The acuminate bracts have conspicuous, scarious margins. Seeds are not papillose.

Disturbed and compacted soil, as at campgrounds.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park, at Corney Brook and Broad Cove; Islands Provincial Park, Shelburne Co. and at

Ellenwood Provincial Park, Yarmouth Co.

NS and NB; ON south to NE, LA and FL; west coast.

Cerastium tomentosum L.
Snow-in-Summer; céraiste tomenteux

Photos by Martin Thomas

A distinctive persistent annual, it is distinguished by the presence of large showy white flowers and the copious covering of twisted white tomentum. The petals are cleft at least a third of their length.

Flowers June to August.

Frequently persisting after cultivation as a rock garden plant.

To be expected throughout the province. Collections exist from most mainland counties.

Ranges from NF to MB; BC, variously south to UT and NC. Introduced as a garden perennial.

Dianthus L.
Pinks

A genus of Eurasia, there are about 300 species in total. Typically, they bear solitary red, pink or white flowers, or crownlike cymes. Calyx is veined with at least 20 markings, subtended by 1–3 bracts. Petals may be notched, but have no appendages. Fruit is a capsule, dehiscing by three valves. Many are ornamentals and several are established as escapes.

Key to species

Plants perennial; flowers solitary on long pedicels, subtended by 2 ovate bracts, < half as long as the calyx.	*Dianthus deltoides*
Plants annual; flowers tightly clustered in terminal cymes, subtended by numerous pubescent bracts, equal in length to the calyx.	*D. armeria*

Dianthus armeria L.

Deptford Pink; oeillet arméria

Photo by David Mazerolle

Photo by Martin Thomas

A lightly pubescent plant this species may reach 60cm in height. Leaves are linear or lanceolate. Flowers are tightly clustered, 3–9 in the inflorescence, subtended by long stiff bracts which may extend beyond the calyx. Petals range from pink to purple.

May to July.

Dry fields, roadsides as an escape.

Scattered from Sandy Cove, Digby Co. and throughout the Annapolis Valley. Infrequent elsewhere.

NS to BC, south to CA and FL. Absent from the prairie provinces.

Dianthus deltoides L.

Maiden Pink; oeillet à delta

Photo by Martin Thomas

Solitary flowers are borne on slender pedicels, 1–4cm long. Involucral bracts are acuminate and ovate, shorter than the calyx.

Flowers from May to August.

Roadsides, meadows, fields and edges where soil is dry or stony.

Photo by Sean Blaney

Uncommon and often overlooked. Meteghan, Digby County, through the Annapolis Valley and along the North Mountain. Elsewhere collected from Mill Village, Queens Co., Halifax and Truro.

Ranging from NS to BC, south to CA, AR and NC.

Honckenya Ehrh.

A genus of only two species, both are succulent halophytes. Flowers are solitary and axillary, unisexual. Staminate flowers have the petals and sepals equal in length, while the pistillate flowers have much smaller petals. Few seeds are produced, which are quite large at 3–5mm.

Honckenya peploides (L.) Ehrh.
Seabeach Sandwort; honckénye robuste

Photo by David Mazerolle

Photo by Alain Belliveau

Colonial, plants form large patches of erect flesh stems. Freely branching, the fleshy leaves are sessile and broadly lanceolate. Flowers in the leaf axils are on very short pedicels, more inconspicuous than showy. Pistillate flowers have petals less than 2mm long.

Flowers from May to September.

Sandy beaches.

Around the coast throughout the province.

From NF to AK, south to OR and VA on either coast, absent from the prairies.

Lychnis L.

A genus of Eurasia, there are three adventive or established species in Nova Scotia. Generally they are tall perennials bearing pink to dark red flowers, with the occasional white cultivar. Styles usually number five although 4–6 are not unheard of, with the capsule bearing equal number of dehiscent valves.

Key to species

A. Plant densely tomentose, with grayish tomentum; flowers shallowly notched.	*Lychnis coronaria*
aa. Plant hirsute or smooth, but not tomentose; flowers deeply cleft.	B
B. Flowers carried in loose cymes; petals 2–4-cleft; plant smooth; sepals bell-shaped and marked by dark purple lines.	*L. flos-cuculi*
bb. Flowers borne in single dense head, petals evenly cleft into two lobes; calyx very long and tubular; plant coarsely pubescent.	*L. chalcedonica*

Lychnis chalcedonica L.
Scarlet Lychnis; Maltese Cross; lychnide de Chalcédoine

Maltese Cross is a tall coarse plant, with a sparsely branched stem and pairs of ovate leaves. Plants are hirsute. Flowers are borne in a single dense cluster; the scarlet petals are evenly cleft into two lobes.

Flowers June to August.

Occasionally in waste ground and disturbed soils, from Kings County to Colchester County and in Cape Breton.

NS west to AB; AK, south to ID, IL and PA. Garden escape.

Lychnis coronaria (L.) Desr.
Mullein Pink; lychnide coronaire

Distinctively cloaked in grey wool, the flowers arise on long pedicels. Their petals are notched only slightly at the distal end.

Summer-flowering.

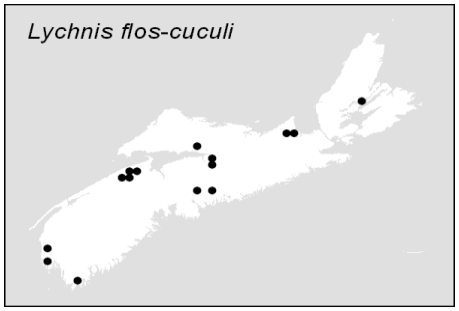
Rocky woods, roadsides.

Reported and collected only from Lunenburg Co. Garden escape.

Elsewhere known from NS to ON south to GA and LA; BC to CA and MT.

Lychnis flos-cuculi L.
Ragged Robin; lychnide fleur-de-coucou

Photo by Martin Thomas



The basal leaves are petiolate while the cauline leaves are sessile. All are obovate, except below the inflorescence where they are lanceolate. Corollas are ragged in appearance and rose or purple. The petals are lobed, with each lobe being further cleft or toothed. Sepals are campanulate and 8–10mm long, with distinct purple lines.

Flowers from May through July.

Limited to wet ditches, meadows, where it is long-persistent.

Local but abundant where found, from Yarmouth to Colchester and Victoria counties.

Ranges from NF to ON, south to WI and VA; western.

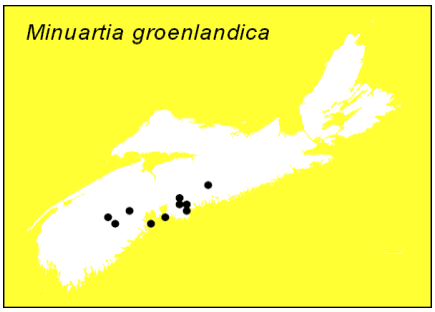
Minuartia L
Sandwort; Stitchwort

Typified by their presence in inhospitable habitats, this genus of small tufted herbs has a single species in Nova Scotia. They are defined by having decussate leaves and usually white flowers.

***Minuartia groenlandica* (Retz.) Ostenf.**
Greenland Sandwort; minuartie du Groenland

Photo by Sean Blaney

Photo by David Mazerolle



Freely-branching, they bear long-narrow leaves, crowded at the base,. Cauline leaves are smaller and fewer along the wiry stems. Flowers are showy white.

Appearing from June to October.

Granite ledges, crevices and gravels, coastal headlands..

Halifax and Lunenburg counties; French Mountain, Inverness County. Recently collected from White's Cove, Digby Co.

Ranges from Greenland to NU, south to NY; disjunct in VA, NC and TN.

Moerhingia L.
sandworts

Three North American species have been ascribed to this genus; two were once included in *Arenaria.* All are small herbs with sparingly branched downy stems. Leaves are ovate to elliptic. Flowers are borne axillary, solitary or few per axil. Petals are white.

Moehringia lateriflora (L.) Fenzl
sabline latériflore

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Sean Blaney

No more than 20cm in height, this species has downy stems and puberulent leaves. The white petals are 4–6mm long.

June to September.

Frequents damp thickets, meadows and coastal headlands.

Very common throughout.

Ranges from NF to AK, south to NV, NM and VA; Eurasia.

Sagina L.
Pearlworts

Cool-temperate herbs total 15 mat-forming species. Flowers are terminal and solitary, or clustered in the leaf axils. Flowers are 4–5-merous. Petals are white. Stipules are absent. Some have been used as forage in Europe, especially in early spring.

Key to species

Flower parts in 4s; petals shorter than the sepals; upper leaves without clusters of smaller leaves in the axils. *Sagina procumbens*

Flower parts in 5s; petals much longer than the sepals and showy; upper leaves having tight clusters of smaller leaves in the axils. *S. nodosa*

Sagina nodosa (L.) Frenzl
Knotted Pearlwort; sagine noueuse

Photo by Sean Blaney

Photo by Sean Blaney

Resembling the next species, it is differentiated by the darker appearance, and presence of reduced leaves in the axils. Stems may be dark green or purplish. Flowers are white, the petals exceeding the length of the sepals. Two subspecies are recognized: ssp. *nodosa* is a smooth plant, introduced to Atlantic Canada, QC, ME and MA. Ssp. *borealis* Crow has glandular pubescence on the petals and lower stems, and is believed to be native.

Flowers from July to September.

Coastal cliffs, sand flats and dune slopes.

Scattered from Annapolis to Guysborough counties.

Native subspecies ranges from Greenland to NT, south to MA and MI.

***Sagina procumbens* L**
Pearlwort; sagine couchée


Photo by Sean Blaney

It is a delicate species with slender stems. Its whorled leaves are filiform. Plant has a yellowish-green hue, in contrast with the darker species above. Flowers are white but inconspicuous, the petals exceeded by the sepals. It may be profusely branched and matted.

Flowers May to October.

Coastal rock crevices, dripping cliffs and damp grassy areas.

Abundant throughout the province, including Sable Island.

In coastal areas around the continent and in the Mississipian states. Great Lakes region; Eurasia.

Saponaria L.
Soapwort

A genus of 30 temperate species, distributed throughout Eurasia. Inflorescence is crowded with single or double flowers, also bearing a clawlike appendage in addition to the blade. These may be pink or white and have a pleasant fragrance. The cylindrical calyx is thin.

***Saponaria officinalis* L.**

Bouncing-Bet; Soapwort; saponaire officinale

Photo by Sean Blaney

Photo by Martin Thomas

A coarse-stemmed plant, stems may reach 1m. They are simple or loosely branched and bearing lanceolate or ovate leaves. Additional leafy shoots may arise in the leaf axils. Showy flowers are crowded in the inflorescence. Recently escaped plants may have double flowers. Calyx is tubular, long and papery thin. The plants are nearly smooth.

Look for flowers in July to early August.

Roadsides, abandoned properties and old gardens. Escaped from cultivation and very persistent, but not agressively spreading.

Generally frequent from Digby to Pictou counties.

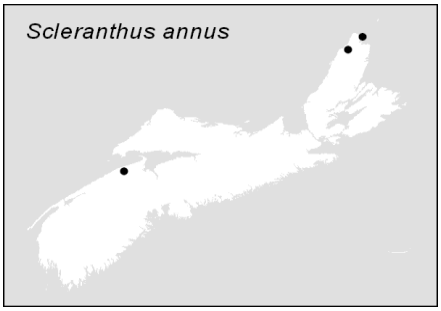
Throughout North America; from Europe.

Scleranthus L.
Knawel

A European genus of 10 species, one was introduced to Nova Scotia in decades past. Flowers are perfect and carried in terminal cymes. Calyx is five-merous, sepals are fused to form an hypanthium (calyx tube). Petals are absent.

Scleranthus anuua L.
Knawel; scléranthe annuel

Photo by David Mazerolle



Freely-branching and matted, it rarely exceeds 15cm in height. Tiny greenish flowers are crowded in the inflorescence, each no longer than 6mm and sessile. Narrow sessile leaves clasp the stem. They are usually less than 1cm long.

Flowering from March to October throughout its range. NS phenology unknown.

Inhabits roadsides and waste ground.

Collected from Waterville, Kings Co. (1945) and known from other Annapolis Valley stations. Also collected at Grand Etang and Cheticamp, Inverness Co. Recently collected on Brier Island (Blaney, 2012).

Known from NF to ON, south to the Gulf of Mexico; BC east to SK, south to CA.

Silene L.
campions

A genus of 400 annual or perennial herbs, mostly they are limited to the north-temperate areas. Only one of our species is native. Flowers may be perfect, or unisexual, stamens fused to the calyx. Tube may be inflated and variously smooth, glandular or merely pubescent. Stamens number 10; styles range from 0–5 (absent in the staminate flowers). The plants have an equal number of valves on the dehiscent capsule. Leaves are entire; stipules are absent.

Key to species

A. Dwarf, compact mounds; flowers solitary; arctic-alpine.	*Silene acaulis*
aa. Large, erect plants; flowers not solitary; widespread.	B
A. Plant including calyx smooth, or nearly so.	C
C. Calyx usually 9mm long or less; stem may have glutinous internodes	*S. antirrhina*
cc. Calyx usually >9mm long; stem without glutinous internodes.	D
D. Petals showy, pink to purple; calyx not saccate, veins simple; <30cm tall.	*S. armeria*
dd. Petals white, with 2 lobes; calyx much inflated and saccate in fruit, network of delicate veins; plant robust to 80cm.	*S. vulgaris*
bb. Calyx and usually stems, densely pubescent to barely hirsute.	E
E. Inflorescence a raceme; flowers solitary at the nodes, on very short pedicels.	F
F. Petals <9mm long, lobed at least half their length; plant to 1m; spikelike racemes.	*S. dichotoma*
ff.Petals <5mm long, entire or merely notched; plant slender, <45cm tall; raceme secund.	*S. gallica*
ee. Inflorescence a cyme, flowers >1 per node; pedicels elongate.	G
G. Flowers red, morning-opening; upper part of stem and calyx not glandular; capsules round.	S*. dioica*
gg. Flowers white or pink, evening opening; calyx and distal stem glandular pubescent; capsule oval.	H
H. Plants covered with sticky pubescence; flowers perfect, styles 3; valves 6.	*S. noctiflora*
hh. Plants glandular above but not sticky; flowers unisexual; styles 5, valves 10.	*S. latifolia*

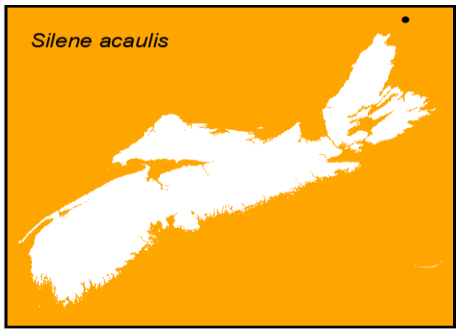
***Silene acaulis* L.**

Moss Campion; silène acaule

Photo by Jamie Ellison

Small, mosslike plants, it produces a basal rosette of very crowded overlapping leaves, less than 1cm long. Violet or purple terminal flowers are carried on short pedicels. Ours is var. *exscapa* (All.) DC.

Flowers June to August.



Gravelly, rocky, turfy barren and coastal cliffs. Windswept alpine habitats.

St. Paul Island.

NF to NU, south to ON, and NH; AK southward to NM and AZ; Greenland.

***Silene antirrhina* L.**
Sleepy Catchfly; silène muflier

Photo by Sean Blaney

An annual species, it arises from a slender taproot. Lower portions of the stems may be puberulent and the distal internodal regions are often glutinous or sticky. The leaves may be ciliate at their bases. The prominently ridged calyx lobes are often purplish. The petals are white suffused with red or magenta.

A plant of disturbed soils and sand barrens.

Recently found at CFB Greenwood. Unclear whether it is native or introduced.

Elsewhere found across Canada to BC and south to CA and FL.

***Silene armeria* L.**
Sweet William Catchfly; silène arméria

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Martin Thomas

Commonly planted as an annual ornamental, it has showy pink or lavender flowers. Reaching 70cm in height, the erect stem has glutinous zones beneath the inflorescence. Sessile leaves clasp the stem.

Flowers throughout the summer, from June to October.

Escaped from cultivation to roadsides and disturbed sites; grassy fields. Not long-persisting.

No collections to date, but frequently seen.

NF to ON, southward; BC. European.

***Silene dichotoma* Ehrh.**
Forking Catchfly; silène fourchu

A hirsute plant, it has lanceolate leaves on pubescent petioles, at least at the base of the plant. Petals are variously coloured, from white to red. Calyx is hirsute.

Flowers June to September.

3-20 Caryophyllaceae

Fields and waste ground.

Long-ago collected from Wolfville but not recorded since.

NS to BC and variously southward. Eurasian.

Silene dioica (L.) Clairv.
Red Cockle; Red Campion; silène dioïque

Resembles *S. latifolia* but having perennial habit. Its red flowers open early in the day, rather than in the evening. Hybrids form with *S. latifolia* and intermediates are known where parent species are sympatric.

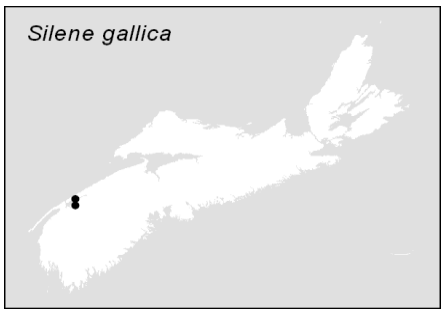
Flowering until frost.

Frequents roadsides and disturbed soils.

Uncommon. Collected from Argyle, Yarmouth County, to Truro and near Amherst in Cumberland Co.

Ranges from NF to BC and south to MO and VA; wesr coast. Originating in Eurasia.

Silene galllica L.
silène de France



Very limited in its distribution in Nova Scotia, this hirsute herb has linear to oblanceolate leaves. The inflorescence is a simple raceme with a single flower at each bracteate node.

Flowers from late June until September, in waste ground and roadsides.

Locally established at Digby and Deep Brook, Digby Co. (reported here as early as 1902). Karsdale, Annapolis Co.

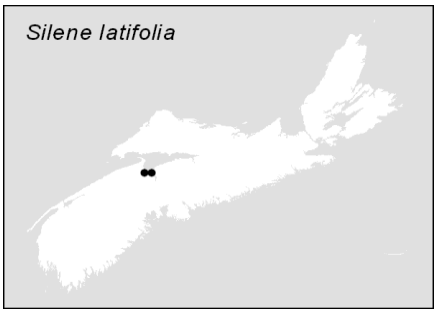
Ranges from NF to ON and south along the coast. Western North America south along the coast and inland to the Gulf of Mexico.

***Silene latifolia* Poiret**

White Campion; White Cockle; silène blanc

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Martin Thomas



A tall annual, this plant may reach 1m. Sparsely branching, the opposite pairs of leaves are ovate to lanceolate, on long petioles below and becoming sessile above. It is densely pubescent and also glandular below the inflorescence.

Flowers large 2.5–3.0cm wide. Calyx is fused, with five deltate teeth, green or purple and glandular-pubescent. Staminate flowers have a cylindrical calyx with 10 veins, 15–22mm long. Pistillate flowers are fragrant, their calyx tube is longer, to 30mm, marked by 20 veins, becoming inflated in fruit. Capsules ovate, each containing grey seeds, 1.3–1.5mm in diameter.

Flowers late May to early September.

Waste ground in urban settings, along railways. Usually grows in loose, dry soils.

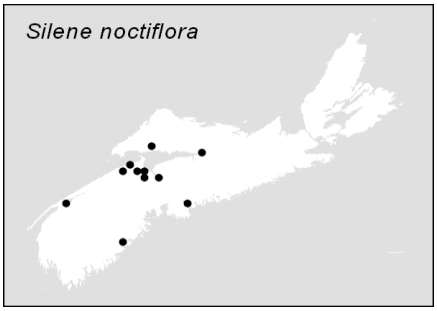
Digby County to Inverness County, limited to northern side of the province.

NS to AK, south to CA, NM and GA. Eurasian.

***Silene noctiflora* L.**

Night-flowering Catchfly; silène noctiflore

Photo by Andy Dean



An annual species, it resembles the previous plant, but with a sticky pubescence.
Lower leaves are long-petiolate and oblong, while the upper ones are sessile and ovate.

Flowers are clustered, their petals are pink above and yellowish below, deeply lobed. The calyx is bulbous, especially in fruit.

Flowers from late May until September.

Frequents urban waste areas, old gardens and roadsides.

Collected from Digby and queens counties north to Truro.

Ranges from NS to AK, southward. Naturalised from Europe.

***Silene vulgaris* L.**

Bladder-campion; silène enflé

Photo by Sean Blaney

A smooth glaucous herb, it produces sparse branching and lanceolate or oblanceolate leaves, often clasping at the bases. Calyx is campanulate, pale in colour and marked by purple veins. Petals are white and bilobed. It is often found rooting at the crown.

Flowers from April to August throughout; Nova Scotian phenology not determined.

Scattered about old gardens, roadsides, fields and disturbed soils.

A common species throughout the province.

NS to BC, south to CA, NM and GA.

Spergula L.
Spurrey

Five Eurasian species comprise this genus of annual plants. Typically they have a terminal inflorescence, the pedicels drooping. Flowers have five petals and 10 stamens. Seeds bear wings or are sharply edged. Succulent plants, they have whorled leaves and stipules.

Spergula arvensis L.
Spurrey, Pineweed, Thousand-joint; Corn Spurrey; spargoute des champs

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Martin Thomas

Much-branched these common weeds have sessile linear leaves in whorls. Stipules are small and inconspicuous. Stems are smooth although somewhat sticky and with swollen nodes. Flowers are white.

Flowering from June to October.

Characteristic of grain fields and moist churned soils elsewhere. One of our most common weeds of croplands.

Found throughout the mainland of NS.

Widespread across the continent.

Spergularia (Pers.) J & C Presl.
Sand-spurry

Numbering about 40 species, this worldwide genus comprises low, matted and succulent herbs. Flowers are pink or white in the three Nova Scotian species. The inflorescence is branched; leaves are subtended by stipules.

3-20 Caryophyllaceae

Key to species

A. Flowers pink; stamens 6; leaves barely succulent, mucronate; not limited to saline soils.	*Spergularia rubra*	
aa. Flowers white or sometimes pink; stamens <6; plants of seashores or saline habitats.	B	
B. Capsule length equal to the calyx; sepals 2.4–5mm long at maturity; seeds 0.6–0.8mm long.	*S. salina*	
bb. Capsule length greatly exceeding that of the calyx; sepals 2.2–3.2mm long; seeds 0.8mm.	*S. canadensis*	

Spergularia canadensis (Pers.) D. Don

Seaside Sand Spurrey; spergulaire du Canada

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Sean Blaney

Fruit are required to distinguish the two halophytic species. The fruit, a capsule greatly exceeds the calyx in length.

Flowers from July to September.

Frequents the upper tidal reaches on muddy shores, in brackish marshes and sand flats.

Common along the Atlantic coast.

Found from NF to NU, south to NY; AK to CA and SK.

***Spergularia rubra* (L.) J & C Presl.**
Sand Spurrey; spergulaire rouge

Photo by Sean Blaney

Flowers are pink on this species. The stipules are also papery in texture making them conspicuous, a character not shared by others. Leaves are linear but not as succulent as other species.

Flowers during a longer season, from May to October.

Sandy, gravelly soils, roadsides, about urban areas and even in sidewalk cracks.

Scattered throughout the province.

Ranges from NF to ON, south to VA; AK to CA and NM. Adventive from Europe.

***Spergularia salina* J. Presl. & C. Presl.**
(=*S. marina* (L.) Griseb.)
spergulaire des marais salés

Photo by Martin Thomas

Flowers may vary from white to red, but its strict coherence with saline soils should separate it from the previous species. The leaves are obviously fleshy and more numerous. Seeds may be papillose or smooth. Commonly found with *S. canadensis* and similar in abundance.

Flowers from June until October.

Typical of seashores, open salt marshes and upper tidal reaches.

Around the entire coast.

Ranges from NS to NT, south to CA; and FL, Mexico and South America; Eurasia.

Stellaria L.

About 100 species make up this genus of chickweeds and stitchworts. Typically the flowers are borne singly in the axils of branching stems or in terminal cymes. Petals and sepals are five-merous, the former deeply incised or absent. Stipules are absent.

Key to species

A. Leaves ovate or elliptical >1cm wide. B

B. Plants erect, smooth; leaves sessile; maritime. *Stellaria humifusa,* in part

bb. Plants sprawling or decumbent, more or less pubescent; middle and lower leaves petiolate; habitat not necessarily maritime. *S. media*

aa. Leaves narrowly lanceolate, or if ovate, less than 1cm wide. C

B. Flowers in cymes. D

D. Cymes with many flowers on spreading branches; petals conspicuous, equal to sepals in length or longer. E

E. Leaves lanceolate; stems smooth; seeds coarse, papillose; inflorescence large, terminal; petals large, showy. *S. graminea*

ee. Leaves narrowly oblanceolate; stems with rough angles; seeds smooth; inflorescence soon lateral; petals small and barely exceeding the sepals. *S. longifolia*

dd. Cymes few-flowered; petals very small, shorter than the sepals. F

F. Cymes lateral, with few flowers; seeds tuberculate; stems decumbent, rooting at the nodes. *S. alsine*

ff. Cymes terminal; some flowers in axils of the upper leaves; seeds smooth; stems decumbent but not rootingat the nodes. *S. borealis*

cc. Flowers solitary or in axillary pairs. G

G. Leaves very succulent, oval to elliptic, to 1cm; seeds smooth. *S. humifusa,* in part

gg. Leaves only slightly succulent, linear to lanceolate, to 1.5cm long; seeds rugose. *S. crassifolia*

***Stellaria alsine* Grimm**
Marsh Chickweed; Bog Chickweed; stellaire fausse-alsine

Generally leafier than others, with the elliptic leaves paired along smooth stems.

Flowers May to October.

Limited to wet sand or waterlogged soils as along ponds and ditches.

Common from Digby and Lunenburg counties northward. Infrequent along the Atlantic shores or on acidic soils.

NF to QC and variously west and south.

***Stellaria borealis* Bigelow**
(*Stellaria calycantha* (Ledeb.) Bong)
Northern Stitchwort; stellaire boréale


Photo by Sean Blaney

Leaves are ovate to lanceolate. The flowers are borne single or with a few in the branch forks.

Flowers from May to September.

Frequents moist thickets, ravines and forests.

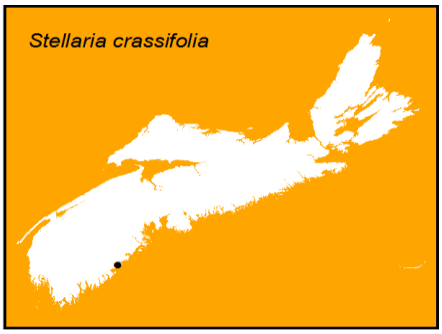
Minas Basin scattered westward to Digby and Yarmouth counties; Cape Breton.

NF to AK, south to WVA, CO and CA; Eurasia.

***Stellaria crassifolia* Ehrh.**

stellaire à feuilles charnues

Photo by David Mazerolle



Decumbent and matted, the stems bear short narrow leaves. Seeds are distinctive, they are reticulated and rugose.

Flowers during July and August.

Frequents pond edges and wet seepy slopes.

The plant has not been studied in Nova Scotia. Known from Liverpool, Queens Co. where it was found in 1936. May be overlooked or misidentified.

NF to AK, south to NV, NM and IL; NS in the east. Eurasia.

***Stellaria graminea* L.**

Grass-leaved Stitchwort; stellaire à feuilles de graminée

Photo by Martin Thomas

Photo by Alain Belliveau

This species is a fragile plant with long narrow leaves, linear or lanceolate in outline. Inflorescence is sparse, but sprawling, with only a few nodding flowers. It may form most of the height of the plant. Roots form at the nodes. Spring growth tends to more matted than the vigorous, robust summer flush.

Flowers from May to October.

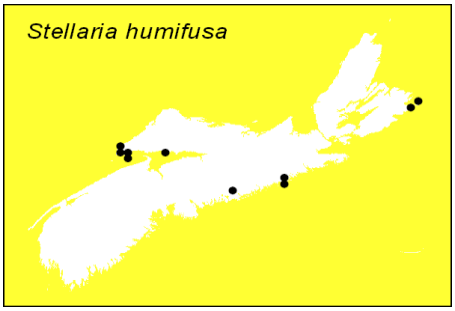
Frequents fields, lawns and gardens. One of our most common weeds, found throughout.

NF to BC, south to CA and GA. Introduced from Eurasia.

***Stellaria humifusa* Rottb.**
stellaire déprimée

Photo by Sean Blaney

Photo by David Mazerolle



The elliptic leaves of this species are usually less than 1cm in length. Seeds are smooth, not wrinkled or papillose.

Flowers from June to August.

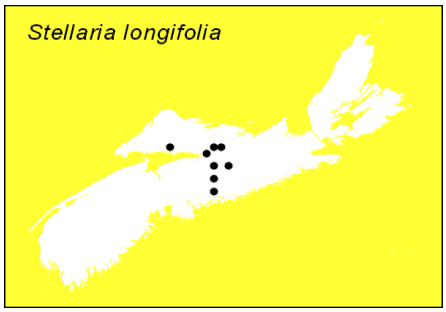
Limited to saltmarshes.

Cumberland, Colchester and along the Atlantic coast from Halifax to Cape Breton County. It is possibly more common than the collections indicate.

Greenland to AK, south to OR, ON and ME.

STATUS: YELLOW-listed.

***Stellaria longifolia* Muhl.**
Long-leaved Chickweed; stellaire à longues feuilles



Resembles *S. graminea*, but for the oblanceolate leaves of this species. The inflorescence is more often lateral than terminal. Formerly thought to be common, but probably confused with *S. graminea.*

Flowers appear from May until July.

Damp grassy habitats, in sandy or mucky soils.

Locally abundant along the Salmon River at Truro and Kemptown, Colchester Co.; along the Musquodoboit and Stewiacke rivers; Isle Haute.

NF to BC, south to CA, NM and TN; Eurasia.

***Stellaria media* (L.) Cyrillo**
stellaire moyenne


Photo by Martin Thomas

Highly variable, but generally this species is decumbent and matted, although its stems may reach 80cm in length. Lower leaves are petiolate; upper leaves sessile, but all are smooth and ovate. Mature petioles have a single row of pubescence. Flowers are sparse and insignificant.

Flowers from April until November.

Moist and shady sites near buildings, gardens, along paths and near the coast.

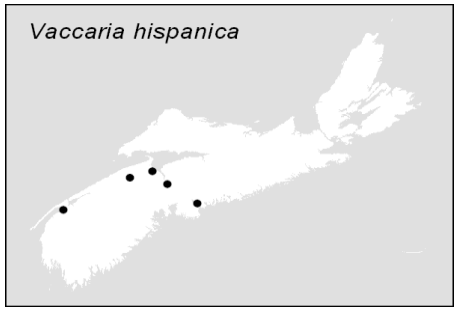
Common throughout, becoming weedy.

Wide-ranging in North America after its introduction from Europe.

Vaccaria Wolf.

Formerly part of *Saponaria*, it is now separated on calyx and petal characters. Four species are included here, with a single annual introduction found in Nova Scotia. Petals are free from auricles. The calyx is marked by only five veins.

Vaccaria hispanica (Miller) Rauschert
Soapwort; Cow-cockle; saponaire des vaches



A smaller species than Bouncing-bet. Leaves are clasping at the base. The flowers are less tightly clustered. Calyx is more bulbous than tubular.

Flowers from June to September.

Waste places after cultivation.

Occasionally reported from Halifax, Berwick and Windsor; also collected from Italy Cross, Lunenburg Co.

Widely distributed on this continent. European introduction.