

Clusiaceae

St. John's-wort family

Of both tropical and temperate regions, the family includes about 1200 species. Nova Scotia has only nine species, in two genera. Typically the flowers are arranged in a cyme or solitary, less frequently in a raceme. The corolla is regular and perfect, 4–5-merous. Pistil is solitary forming a many-seeded capsule. Leaves are simple and opposite on the stem.

Key to genera

- A. Plants green; flowers yellow, hypogynous glands absent. *Hypericum*
- aa. Plants reddish; flowers salmon-pink, hypogynous glands present. *Triadenum*

Hypericum L.

St. John's-worts

Numbering about 400 species in the northern-temperate latitudes, all have yellow or orange flowers, usually in cymes. The perianth is 4–5-merous. Sepals are persistent and unequal in size. Fruit produced is a capsule. Our native species tend to be of damp habitats and not weedy in nature.

Key to species

- A. Stamens numerous, more than 20. B
 - B. Plants stout, freely branching; >40cm tall; styles not joined to the base; locules 3. *Hypericum perforatum*
 - bb. Plants slender, with few branches; <50cm tall; styles conjoined to form a slender beak on the capsule; capsule with 1 locule. *H. ellipticum*
- aa. Stamens few, less than 12. C
 - C. Inflorescence a raceme; leaves with a single vein; annual of dry soils. *H. gentianoides*
 - cc. Inflorescence a cyme; leaves with 3–7 veins from the base; annual or perennial of wet places. D
 - D. Leaves twice as long as wide, clasping. E
 - E. Upper flowers subtended by round leaves, reduced in size; sepals elliptic, much shorter than the capsule. *H. boreale*
 - ee. Upper flowers subtended by narrow leaves or scale-like bracts; sepals linear or oblong, nearly equalling the capsule in length. *H. mutillum*
 - dd. Leaves 3 or more times longer than wide; leaves not clasping. F
 - F. Leaves with 5 or more veins; broad at the base. *H. majus*

ff. Leaves with 5 or fewer veins, narrowing at the base.

G

G. Leaves 1–3-veined, 1–4mm wide; mature capsules 5–6mm long; sepals 4–6mm long in fruit.

H. canadense

gg. Leaves 3–5-veined, 2–6mm wide; capsules 3–5mm long; sepals 2–4.5mm long in fruit.

H. dissimulatum Page | 478

***Hypericum canadense* L.**
millepertuis du Canada



Photo by Sean Blaney

Small in stature, this species rarely reaches 40cm. The stems are usually unbranched, bearing pairs of linear leaves. Flowers are 1–3, but fewer than in *H. mutilum*, a species it resembles. Sepals are lanceolate and not exceeding the capsule in length. Inflorescence is subtended by a pair of linear bracts.

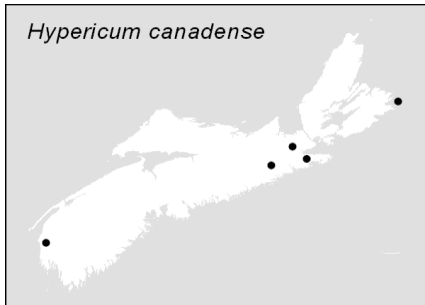
Grows in poorly-drained soils.

Common throughout.

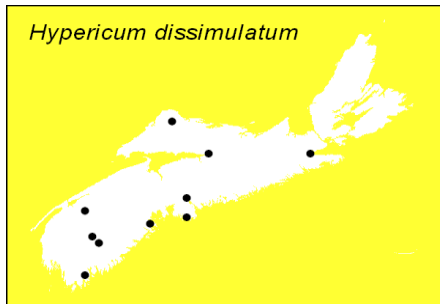
Ranges from NL to ON, south to MS and FL; WA and OR.



Photo by Martin Thomas



***Hypericum dissimulatum* Bickn.**



It is so similar to the previous species, that some authors combine them. Leaves are generally with more veins (3–5) and have greater variability in leaf width, in this species. Sepals are also shorter in fruit than in *H. canadense*.

Wet mucky soils in lacustrine habitats.

Historically collected from Digby to Halifax Co. with a single specimen from each of Pictou and Guysborough counties.

NS to ON, south to WI and along the coast to NC.

STATUS: YELLOW-listed. It is also rare in New Brunswick, where Hinds (1999) suggested this was a hybrid entity between *Hypericum canadense* and *H. mutilum* or *H. boreale*.

***Hypericum ellipticum* Hook.**
millepertuis elliptique



Photo by Sean Blaney

Distinctive in its habit, with simple smooth stems. Sessile leaves are ovate or obovate, clasp the stem. Inflorescence is a few-flowered cyme of orange or yellow flowers. Sepals are elliptical and shorter than the petals.

Flowers only in July and August.

A common lakeshore species and often found in meadows, swamps and streamsides.

Common from southwestern NS to central counties; absent from eastern regions and northern Cape Breton.

NL to MB, south to TN and NC.



Photo by Sean Blaney

***Hypericum gentianoides* (L.) BSP**
Orangegrass; Pinweed; millepertuis fausse-gentiane



Photo by Sean Blaney

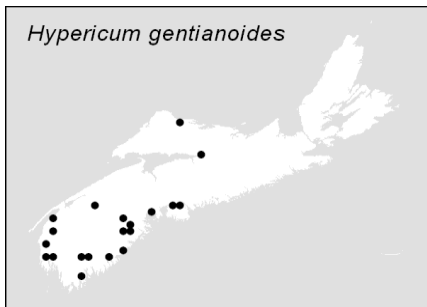
An annual species, the freely branching cyme extends most of the height of the plant. Flowers and leaves are minute, the latter reduced to scales. Capsule greatly exceeds the calyx.

Dry sterile and disturbed soils as along railroads.

Found first in Nova Scotia in 1991, on the Highway 103



Photo by Martin Thomas



Hypericum gentianoides

verge by Fancy Lake, Lunenburg Co. Now often encountered in southwestern counties from Halifax to Yarmouth.

NS; ME to ON, south to FL and TX.

***Hypericum majus* (A. Gray) Britton**
millepertuis majeur

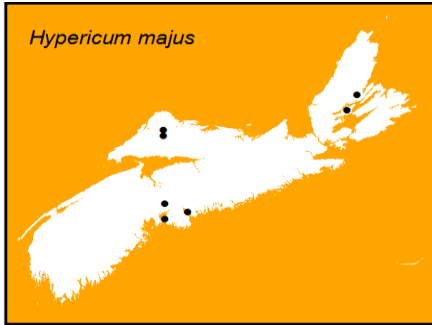


Photo by Sean Blaney

A robust species, it has lanceolate or narrowly oblong leaves. The compact inflorescence comprises tightly clustered flowers. Resembles *H. canadense* but is generally larger.

Flowers July to September.

Wet or dry open soil.



Widely scattered locations. Until recently, only known from Halifax area and Big Baddeck, Victoria County, and thought to be historic.

NL to BC, south to OR, OK and DE.

STATUS: ORANGE-listed

***Hypericum mutilum* L.**
(includes *H. boreale* (Britton) E. Bickn.)
millepertuis nain



Photo by Martin Thomas

Freely branching, it has ovate or oblong leaves. Numerous flowers are well-spaced, subtended by linear bracts, exceeding the capsule in length. This differs from the rounded, much shorter bracts of *H. mutilum*, var. *boreale* . which has the reduced bracts rounded at the apices. The sepals are much shorter than the capsules.

Frequents swamps and edges of ponds and streams.

Common in southwestern counties, rarer northward to Cape Breton.

NS to ON, south to TX and FL; SK; BC and WA; CA.



Photo by Martin Thomas

Hypericum perforatum* L.*Common St. John's-wort; millepertuis commun***Photo by Sean Blaney*

A perennial weedy species, it is freely branching, reaching almost 1m in height. Stems may be reddish brown. Leaves are oblong, bearing numerous small fenestrae on their lower surfaces. Sepals lanceolate and only half the length of the petals., which are orange-yellow. Their margins are dotted black.

Flowers from 10 July to August.

Grows in light soils or sandy, gravelly edges of streams or roads.

Common throughout NS.

Widely naturalized from Europe.

CAUTION: Toxic, may cause photosensitivity if handled by both people and livestock.

*Photo by Martin Thomas****Triadenum* Raf****marsh St. John's-worts**

Two of 10 species in eastern North America grow in Nova Scotia. It is separated from *Hypericum* on the presence of three hypogynous glands, which position alternates with three stamen bundles. Salmon-pink flowers are arranged in small cymes.

Key to species

Sepals pointed, 5–7mm long; styles on mature fruits 2–3mm long.

Triadenum virginicum

Sepals blunt, 5mm or less long; styles on mature fruit < 1.3mm long.

T. fraseri

***Triadenum fraseri* (Spach) Gleason**

Millepertuis de Fraser

The styles and sepals in this species tend to be shorter than in the following plant. Sepals range in size from 2.5–5mm and are usually elliptical. The styles on the mature fruits are within 0.5–1.3mm in length.

Flowers in summer, July to August.

Found from Digby Neck to Sydney, but scattered on either coasts.

NL to SK, south to NE and NC; BC to WA.

***Triadenum virginicum* (L.) Raf.**

Marsh St. John's-wort; millepertuis de Virginie



Photo by Sean Blaney

This and the previous species bear sessile cordate leaves.. Sepals cover more than half the capsule length. The entire plant appears pinkish.

Salmon-pink flowers in July and August.

Riparian, lacustrine, beaches and anywhere the soil is mucky, peaty and damp.

Common in the southwest, northeast to Halifax and Cape Breton.

NS; QC to ON south to FL and TX.



Photo by Alain Belliveau