

Aquilegia canadensis L. Canadian Columbine

The genus *Aquilegia* has a wide global distribution with species native to Europe, Japan, and North America. It is a very popular genus in the garden and has been heavily hybridized. *A. canadensis* is the species that is native to the Eastern United States and Canada. This one can be quite a challenge to find. Determined gardeners may have to search out specialty plant sales at places such as public gardens to find the true, non-hybridized Canadian columbine.

This native seems to have become somewhat rare in Ohio but when I do find it I have seen it thriving in some pretty Spartan conditions. It will do well in full sun to partial shade in average soil that is moist to moist and well drained.

Growing to a height of 18 inches to two feet a single plant is striking but to get the best effect this species needs to be massed in groups of at least three or more plants. Fortunately it will self-seed fairly well so in idea habitats a single plant will increase to several in just a few years.

Mostly pest free but watch out for columbine leaf miner.



I have seen plants offered for sale that were labeled as *A. canadensis* which, even though the flower colors of red with yellow were right, were not Canadian columbine. In true *A. canadensis* the flower stems bend over at the top causing the flowers to hang directly face down. Also, the spurs are fairly stout and protrude straight back with no twists or curves. Finally, true Canadian columbine does not flower as profusely as most hybrids do.