

Aquilegia canadensis

Wild or Eastern Red Columbine

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
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Perennial	Flowers En Masse & Close-up, Fruit, Leaves
Height: ½–3 feet	
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Red and yellow	
Characteristics	
Erect, branching, herbaceous perennial	
Alternate , biterrnately**compound , glabrous , glaucous , green-to-bluish leaves, may be pubescent below	
Terminal panicles of nodding flowers w/ 5 red sepals , 5 spurred petals & exserted stamens/styles April–July	
Shiny black seeds in an etaerio of follicles	
Self-seeds to form large colonies but not thuggish	
Attributes	
Tolerates dry soil , drought, and rabbits; no serious diseases and good resistance to leaf miner where injury tends to be mostly cosmetic	
Deer seldom severely damage	
Ethnobotanic uses; may be harmful if ingested	
Attracts hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, moths; larval host to ~11 lepidopterans	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained	Alliaria petiolata - Garlic Mustard
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	Aquilegia vulgaris - European Columbine***
Water Requirements : Dry, Moist	
Continuous full sun/extreme temperatures may affect growth; foliage may go dormant for a time	
Prune empty seed follicles in summer to keep tidy	*In the Mid-Atlantic Region, it is native to DC, rare in DE, found in most of MD although less frequent in the Coastal Plain, and occurs throughout PA. In VA, it is common in the mountains, frequent in the Piedmont, and infrequent in the Coastal Plain.
Generally lives 3–5 years and needs no dividing	**Leaves are doubly ternate (arranged in groups of three).
Use in borders or in rain or woodland gardens	***Different columbine species grown in close proximity may freely hybridize.
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b	

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Elaine Mills (top), U.S. National Arboretum and by Mary Free, Quarry Shade & private gardens



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