

Geranium maculatum

Wild or Spotted Geranium

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Native in much of eastern North America,* this lovely, adaptable wildflower's alternative common name, Cranesbill, refers to its distinctive fruit, which resembles the bill of a crane. The Virginia Native Plant Society honored Wild Geranium as Wildflower of the Year in 2020.



Perennial	Flowers, Buds, Fruit, En Masse
Height: 1½–2 feet	
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Light pink, dark pink, lilac	
Characteristics	
Clump-forming, semi-evergreen herbaceous perennial	<p>Excellent Replacement for</p> <p>Alliaria petiolata - Garlic Mustard</p> <p>Ficaria verna - Lesser Celandine</p> <p>Vinca Minor - Periwinkle</p> <p>*It is native in DC and common in the DE Piedmont, but uncommon in its Coastal Plain. It occurs mostly in the Piedmont and mountains of MD. It is present throughout PA. In VA, it is common in the mountains and Piedmont but rare in the Coastal Plain.</p> <p>** The second picture illustrates protandry (male parts mature before the female), which helps prevent self-pollination. The flower to the left is in the male phase: anthers are producing pollen and stigmas are absent. The flower entering the female phase shows withering anthers and five emerging stigmas.</p>
Opposite , palmately -cleft and coarsely-toothed, medium to dark green leaves	
Gynodioecious , 5- petaled , mostly protandrous ** flowers in terminal corymbs on upright stems Mar–July	
Explosive, beak-like fruit (schizocarp)	
Spreads by rhizomes but not aggressively	
Attributes	
Tolerates clay soil , poor soil, dry soil, drought, poor drainage, and rabbits; no serious pests or diseases; deer occasionally severely damage	
Ethnobotanic , therapeutic, and herbal uses	
Attracts bees, syrphid flies, and butterflies to flowers and mourning doves, quail, and deer to seeds; larval host to ~27 lepidopterans	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	
Soil Requirements : Well-drained, average	
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	
Water Requirements : Moist	
If sited in full sun, needs more moisture	
Foliage yellows or declines in heat and dry soil	
Use under trees (especially white oak) and in woodland gardens	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–b	
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden and Simpson Gardens and by Elaine Mills (bottom right), U.S. National Arboretum