

THE WILD GERANIUMS OR CRANESBILLS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Arch C. Budd

In the Province of Saskatchewan four species of Wild Geranium are found. The Geraniums or Cranesbills have opposite, palmately lobed leaves and five sepals, five petals and generally ten stamens. The style, in the centre of the flower, extends into a long beak-like column at maturity. At its tip it bears a narrow appendage or point, the length of which serves to distinguish some species. When mature, the column splits from the base into five segments which spring out, releasing the seed.

The following simple key will separate our native species.

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 1. | Flowers over half an inch across, with petals much longer than the sepals; perennial plants. | 2. |
| | Flowers not over half an inch across, with petals barely longer than the sepals; annual or biennial plants. | 3. |
| 2. | Petals white, sometimes with pinkish veins. | <i>G. Richardsonii</i> . |
| | Petals purple; plants with sticky glandular stems. | <i>G. viscosissimum</i> . |
| 3. | Beak at end of style not over one-eighth inch long; inflorescence compact. | <i>G. carolinianum</i> . |
| | Beak at end of style over three-sixteenths inch long; inflorescence rather open and loose. | <i>G. Bicknellii</i> . |

Geranium Richardsonii Fisch and TrautvWILD WHITE GERANIUM

This mountain species is very plentiful in the forested areas of the Cypress Hills but is not found elsewhere in the Province. It grows from one to three feet in height, erect, and bears numerous showy white flowers from one to one and a half inches across. The inflorescence is rather open and loose.

Geranium viscosissimum F. and M.STICKY PURPLE GERANIUM

This species is also associated with the Rocky Mountains and their foothills, but is found in our Province on the southern slopes of the Cypress Hills, but rarely elsewhere. The plant grows from one to two feet in height and is generally quite branching, with very sticky, glandular stems and leaf stalks. The showy flowers are borne in compact clusters and are from one and a quarter to one and a half inches across, pink-purple in color.

Geranium carolinianum L.CAROLINA WILD GERANIUM

This is a low-growing, annual species with pale pink to white flowers, from one-third to one-half inch across, the petals almost hidden by the sepals. It is not often found in the Province, being an eastern species, but may be looked for in moist meadows towards our eastern border.

Geranium Bicknellii BrittonBICKNELL'S GERANIUM

This species is an annual or a biennial with pink flowers and has been found in many wooded parts of the Province, particularly on cleared or burned-over bush land. It is very plentiful on roads and pathways in the forests of the Cypress Hills. While very similar to the preceding species it may be separated by its open inflorescence and the longer narrow beak on the mature style column.

BUTTERCUPS

L.T. Carmichael

This family includes many of our most beautiful and cherished flowers. Among these are Buttercups, Pasque Flower, Canada Anemone, Marsh Marigold, and Columbines.

The family is believed to include the most primitive of seed plants now living and is considered to be the trunk of the family tree of the seed plants from which the more highly specialized groups have branched off at different times and through the ages.

Known by children the world over who study the reflection of its petals from their chins, as an indication of their fondness for butter, the plants are easy to recognize. Their yellow petals with a glistening metallic sheen and their much dissected leaves are distinguishing characteristics. They are sometimes confused with the cinquefoils, a group of the rose family which have five-petaled yellow flowers. These two groups, however, may be easily distinguished by a glance at the calyx. That of the buttercups is made up of five separate green or yellow sepals, while the sepals of the cinquefoils are united into a saucer-shaped calyx, having five main divisions and five alternating bractlets.

We have over a dozen species of buttercups in Saskatchewan but I will describe only some of the most common and conspicuous which I have collected.

PRAIRIE BUTTERCUP
(*Ranunculus ovalis*)

This is one of our earliest spring flowers coming into bloom on the moist prairie during the first week in May.

The plant is ordinarily from three to twelve inches high. Its golden petals, up to a quarter of an inch long glisten brightly among the new blades of grass.

The basal leaf-blades are from 1/4 to 1 1/4 inches wide. They are kidney-shaped to oval with round lobes. The upper stem leaves are sessile with linear divisions. When the petals drop the globular fruit-head with its short beaked achenes is still a distinguishing characteristic.

SEASIDE BUTTERCUP
(*R. Cymbalaria*)

This little buttercup is common in marshes or along the borders of sloughs and streams throughout the West. It is a low smooth plant, spreading by runners which take root at the joints. Both the flower stems and the leaf