



Photo: squamatologist (CC-BY-NC-ND)

**Common Name:**  
Eastern Red Columbine

**Plant Type:** Perennial

**Light Requirements:**  
Full Sun to part shade

**Height:** 1-3 ft.

**Bloom Time:** Late  
spring – early summer

**Hardiness Zone:** 3-8

## **Aquilegia Canadensis**

*Aquilegia canadensis* (Eastern Red Columbine) is an herbaceous perennial in the Ranunculaceae family. It is native to eastern North America. *Aquilegia* as a genus has about 60-70 species across North America, Europe, and Asia. Hybridization readily occurs through cultivation or by pollination in areas where species overlap.

Columbines can vary drastically in flower color, size and shape, but their foliage provides a recognizable characteristic with their gray-green color and three-lobed leaves. Heights generally vary from 1 to 3 feet tall depending on soil, light, and moisture conditions. Basal leaves grow first, forming a mound of foliage, and flowering occurs for about a month in late spring to early summer.

Eastern red columbine produces 1-2-inch-long flowers with five yellow petals, each with a red spur for nectar and yellow stamens. The flowers are a critical food source for ruby throated hummingbirds as well as hawk moths and various bee species. It has few insect pests, but it is a host plant for columbine duskywing, a moth caterpillar that eats the foliage. Leaf miner larva can tunnel through foliage leaving whitish streaks, although this damage is mostly cosmetic. Deer and rabbits generally leave columbines alone.

Columbines are short lived by perennial standards, but readily spread through their seeds. Self-sown seeds usually flower in their second year. Seeds from hybrid plants don't grow true to the parent plant. They can grow in full sun to moderate shade, and prefer rich, moist soils but will tolerate a wide range of conditions so long as there is good drainage.

References:

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/eastern-red-columbine-aquilegia-canadensis/>

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/columbine-5-30-08.aspx>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/beauty/columbines/birdsandbees.shtml>