

# Rockrose

*Helianthemum canadense*

**STATUS**

Not listed

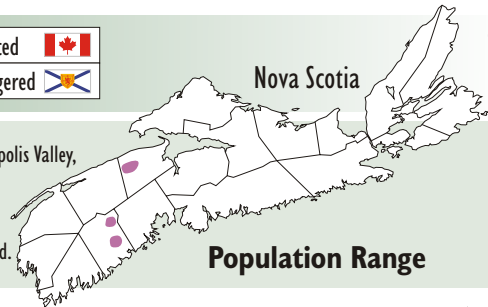


Endangered



57

Nova Scotia



Found mainly in the Annapolis Valley, Kings County but also in Queens County, with an approximate number of 5000 plants left in the wild.

**Population Range**

## Habitat

Associated with dry sand plains and heath barrens, the borders of mixed woods, and ditches, especially in areas that have been lightly disturbed. Usually found in sunny spots with limited competition from woody species.



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## Species Description

Rockrose (or Canada Frostweed) is a small (10-40 cm), finely hairy perennial herb with lance-shaped leaves. Stems are reddish brown and branched. Its yellow flowers are 2-4 cm wide with five petals. Each plant produces one (or sometimes two) flowers, which grow at the end of the stem.

Rockrose is most commonly seen in Nova Scotia in sand barrens and ditches. Look in June and July for showy, yellow flowers that open on sunny days and drop their petals after only a few hours. Much smaller self fertilizing flowers (that do not open) appear on side shoots in August.

## Interesting Points

- There are about 100 Rockrose species in this family of perennial herbs or small shrubs, but only *H. canadense* is found in Nova Scotia.
- The name is from the Greek *helios* (sun) and *antheon* (flower).
- Used medicinally as an astringent and tonic. It has been used in the past to treat scrofula, diarrhoea, dysentery, and syphilis.



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## Similar Species

### Note:

Although there are many other rockrose species, none are found in Nova Scotia

### Pinweed:

Often found growing among Rockrose plants in sand barren habitat. Its small flowers and seed pods look similar to Rockrose's small self fertilizing flowers. They are similar in size, both with wiry stems, however, Rockrose's stem is more rough to the touch.



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## Threats to Survival

- Habitat loss and destruction: 97% of its sand barren habitat is gone due to agriculture, OHV traffic, housing and road development, sand quarries, and other types of land conversion.
- Fire suppression and caribou extirpation (both used to create habitat).
- Shading from the invasive Scotch pine tree.



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Heavy disturbance from road building and OHV use.

## How You Can Help

Learn about the species and report sightings, but do not disturb the plant - tread lightly! Advocate sustainable land use practices. Drive OHVs only on designated trails, and not in sensitive sand barren habitat.



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## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** NS DNR (902) 679-6091

**Info:** [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or [sightings@speciesatrisk.ca](mailto:sightings@speciesatrisk.ca)