

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

Lindheimer Chapter

PLANT OF THE MONTH MARCH, 2011

COLUMBINE, *AQUILEGIA SP.*



Red Columbine, *A. canadensis*



Yellow Columbine, *A. chrysantha*

The Wildflower Center website (www.wildflower.org) lists 15 species of Aquilegia, three of which are native to Texas. The Red Columbine (*A. canadensis*) can be found throughout the Eastern half of the US and Canada, but in Texas it's only found along the southern and eastern edges of the Hill Country. The species commonly called Yellow Columbine, *A. chrysantha*, can be found in several Southwestern states, and in Texas occurs naturally in a few western counties. The third species, Longspur Columbine (*A. longissima* – not pictured), is pale yellow with long spurs, and is found in the Chisos and Davis Mountains in West Texas and the mountains of southern Arizona.

All Columbines require at least part shade and well drained soils. If planted in soils that are too rich, they will produce more leaves than flowers. The Red Columbine is found in woodlands, while the Yellow Columbines are usually found near waterfalls and other moist areas. All Columbines will require some extra water in hot dry summers.

These plants are wonderful spring bloomers for a shady spot in the garden. They will attract hummingbirds and butterflies. When not in bloom, the ferny leaves give a soft look. Columbines are perennials and clumps can be divided in early spring to get more plants, however they will also spread by seed. They do hybridize easily, so if you plant a variety of species together the seedlings may be an interesting mix of colors. Columbines are considered moderately deer resistant.