



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

Common Name: Colorado blue columbine; Rocky Mountain columbine
Scientific Name: *Aquilegia caerulea*
Plant Family: Ranunculaceae

Identifying Characteristics:

Size: Colorado blue columbine is a bushy, clump-forming perennial herb less than 1 m (3 ft) in height.

Leaves: Compound, biternate, glabrous leaves with lobed and deeply-cleft leaflets.

Flowers: 5 sepals (generally pale-sky blue), 5 petals (generally whitish) with backward-extending, straight and slender spurs to 5 cm (2 in). Typically upward-facing flowers, 5 to 8 cm across (2 to 3 in).

Habitat: Partly shady, moist, well-drained, sandy-loamy, organic rich soil in moderate to montane elevations.

Bloom time: Late spring to early summer

Information sources:

UW-Madison Botanical Garden (www.botany.wisc.edu/garden)
The State of Colorado (www.colorado.gov)
USDA, NRCS (plants.usda.gov)
Missouri Botanical Garden (www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp)

Did you know? *Aquilegia* is the Latin term for eagle; the five flower spurs of this plant resemble eagle talons. While most authors have spelled the epithet "*caerulea*," the original spelling is "*coerulea*." It has been noted that an infusion made from the roots of *Aquilegia caerulea* was used by the Gosivte tribe to treat abdominal pains or as a panacea. Colorado blue columbine is the state flower of Colorado, whose state song also happens to be "Where the Columbines Grow" (A.J. Fynn, 1915).



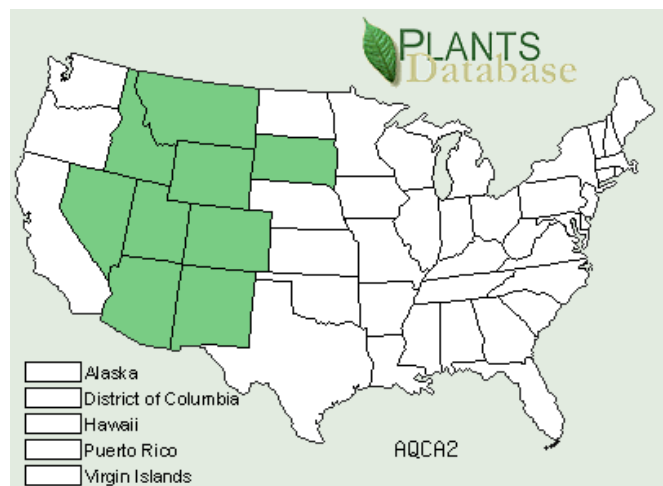
Photograph by G. A. Cooper @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Photograph by Al Schneider @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Phenological observation:
First Flower

Distribution Area:



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (plants.usda.gov)