

Common name: **Canada mayflower** Genus Species: ***Maianthemum canadense***



Photo credit: Elmer Verhasselt, Bugwood.org

Description: Canada mayflower is a long-lived perennial herbaceous plant, 2 to 10 inches tall. It often occurs in large patches connected by creeping underground stems. Its tiny, white flowers have both male and female parts and are grouped into a single, showy cluster on each plant.

Habitats: It grows in diverse habitats, from maritime forests to subalpine meadows; on ridge tops, slopes, rolling hills, and bottomlands; in bog and swamp forests, fen uplands, boreal hardwoods, mixed hardwood-conifer, and conifer forests.

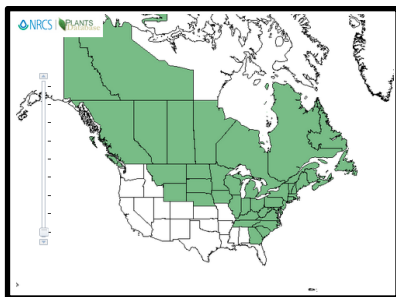
Phenology highlight: The Latin genus name, *Maianthemum*, means May blossom, an appropriate name because the plant flowers in May in many areas.

Species facts

- Canada mayflower is pollinated by insects including solitary bees and bee flies.
- It has persistent fruits that provide food for birds during the spring.
- Canada mayflower has an "endangered" or "threatened" status in some areas.
- This unusual member of the lily family has only 2 petals, 2 sepals, and 4 stamens, rather than the usual 3-3-6 pattern seen in most members of this family.



Photo credit: Joy Viola, Northeastern University, Bugwood.org



Why observe this species? Canada mayflower is a USA-NPN regional plant species. Regional species are ecologically or economically important but are distributed more locally than calibration species. The NPN integrates these observations to understand better plant responses within the different geographic regions of the nation.

Tip for observing this species: If drought seems to be the cause of leaf senescence for a plant, please make a comment about it for that observation.

Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 25 August 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenology.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org)



Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)

Note: flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record Y for "open flowers" you should also record Y for "flowers or flower buds."

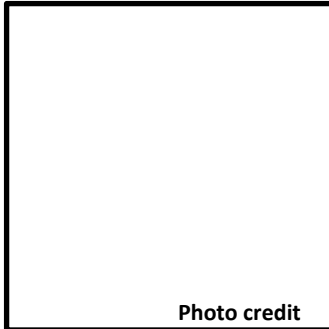


Photo credit

Initial growth New growth of the plant is visible after a period of no growth (winter or drought) as new shoots breaking through the soil. Growth is considered "initial" on each bud or shoot until the first leaf has fully unfolded.



Rob Routledge
Sault College, Bugwood.org

Leaves One or more live fully unfolded leaves are visible. For seedlings, consider only true leaves not the small leaf (cotyledon) found on the stem almost immediately after the seedling sprouts. Do not include dried or dead leaves.



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Flowers or flower buds One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.

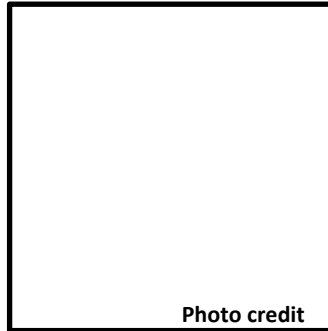


Photo credit

Open flowers One or more open fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when the reproductive structures (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between open flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



Rob Routledge
Sault College, Bugwood.org

Fruits One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For Canada mayflower, the fruit is berry-like and changes from green or speckled white to mottled pink to deep translucent red.

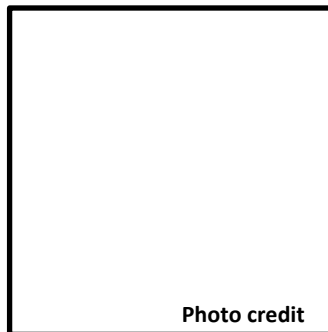


Photo credit

Ripe fruits One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For Canada mayflower, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned deep translucent red.

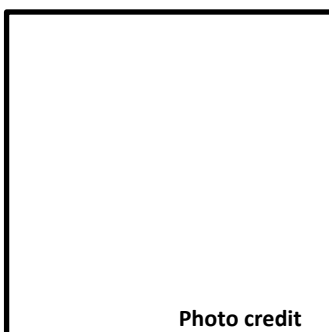


Photo credit

Recent fruit or seed drop One or more mature fruits or seeds have dropped or been removed since your last visit. Do not include immature fruits that dropped before ripening, or long-empty fruits that remain on the plant.



Elmer Vernasselt
Bugwood.org

Canada mayflower clone Canada mayflower can form extensive patches or clones due to growth of underground branching rhizomes (vegetative shoots). A single clone can be up to 20 feet in diameter and 30 to 60 years old.

All phenophases pictured here