

GERANIUM FAMILY

GERANIACEÆ.

Cranesbill. Wild Geranium.

Geranium maculatum.

Found in lush grass, or light shade, in fields and roadside banks, during May and June.

The stalk, single at first, but presently parting into twice-forking branches, is from 10 to 18 inches in height, and leafy above the branches; its surface is hairy, and color yellow-green.

The large leaf is 3- to 5-times divided with sharp-pointed tips, an irregularly toothed margin, distinctly showing ribs, hairy surface; yellowish-green in color. The leaves are set on stems in pairs, or near the flowers are placed close together and immediately upon the stalk. The size is variable, but often quite large.



The flower has 5 rounded petals that are somewhat bearded at the base; their texture is so fine it plainly shows the veins, the surface is very smooth, their edges slightly curve, and the color is a delicate pinkish-lavender; the calyx with its 5 needle-pointed tips is hairy, and light green; the 10 long stamens are spreading, and the pistil is 5-parted. The flowers, on short stems, are set in pairs, or in a loose, leafy terminal group.

At the Joints of the stems are a pair of leaves and several tiny leafkins. Though set in occasional pairs the blossoms open one at a time. It is noticeable that the flowers which open in cool weather, or in a shady place, are almost crimson in hue, the color being always very variable. The leafage is especially brilliant in autumn, and sometimes as early as July a leaf will be found turned to a vivid scarlet-red. The curious and decorative seed-vessel gives the plant its fantastic folk-name.

Photo credits: kbarton



CRANESBILL: *Geranium maculatum*.