

## **Carolina Geranium, *Geranium carolinianum* L.<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Classification**

Common Name: Carolina Geranium

Scientific Name: *Geranium carolinianum* L.

Family: Geraniaceae, Geranium Family

### **Seedling**

The stems are brown to pink, with a dense cover of short, downwardly-directed hairs (Figure 1). The cotyledon blades are rounded and broadly flattened at the apex. The flattened tip is slightly indented with the midvein extended into the notch as a small ridge. The upper surface is green while the lower surface is tinged pink, and both sides are hairy. The leaves develop alternately.

### **Mature Plant**

Carolina Geranium is an annual, much-branched plant forming a circular growth pattern from the center of the plant, and may be ascending to erect (to 0.6 m tall from a tap root) (Figure 2). The leaves are up to 7 cm wide and are suborbicular to kidney shaped in outline, deeply divided into 5-7 divisions



**Figure 1.** Seedling, Carolina Geranium, *Geranium carolinianum* L.

and lobed. This plant has leaves at the base and on the stem, which may be either oppositely or alternately arranged on petioles of variable length. The flowers usually occur in pairs or in compact clusters. The 5 sepals are up to 7 mm long with a 1-2 mm long tip (mucro). The 5 petals range in color from pale pink to pale purple. Each flower usually produces 5 seeds. The seeds are enclosed in a 5-lobed capsule with a 13-15 mm long central "beak." On maturation, the capsule springs open from the base and the five

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divisions curve upward elastically, frequently dispersing the seeds for considerable distances. The seeds are about 2 mm long and are prominently veined in a rectangular pattern and oblong in shape.



**Figure 2.** Mature plant, Carolina Geranium, *Geranium carolinianum* L.

## History

The genus name *Geranium* is an old Greek name derived from the word for crane. The long beak of the fruit was thought to resemble the beak of that bird. The species name *carolinianum* is a Latinized English word, which means "of Carolina" and refers to the origin of the first named collection.

## Habitat

This weed occurs in disturbed areas, gardens, cultivated fields, pastures, roadsides and waste places throughout Florida, the United States, southern British Columbia and Ontario, the West Indies and Mexico.

## Biology

The seeds are eaten by birds and rodents. The seeds are reported to have astringent, febrifuge, diuretic and nephritic properties.