

## Heuchera Hunt

*Heuchera*, also known as alumroot or coral bells, are often found growing on rocky cliffs or in boulder crevices. There are about 37 species of *Heuchera* worldwide, with four species occurring in the greater metro area. Their attractive foliage makes them a favorite in cultivated gardens as well. *Heuchera* are members of the Saxifragaceae family – in fact, the name saxifrage literally means “stone-breaker” and may refer to the fact that many species within this family occur on rock faces.

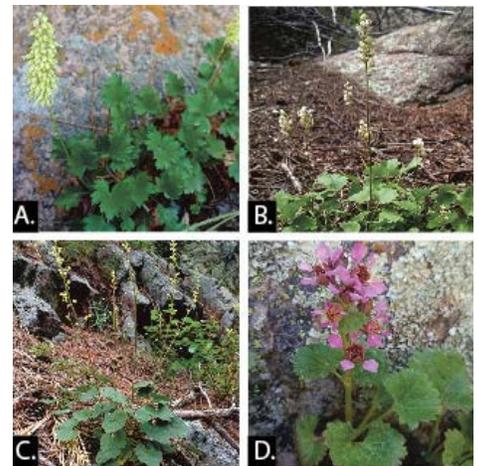
The species found in the greater metro area are: (A.) *H. bracteata*, (B.) *H. hallii*, (C.) *H. parvifolia*, and *H. richardsonii*. Our *Heuchera* have palmately lobed, basal leaves, and rather small flowers with five, white to pale yellow petals. While *H. bracteata* and *H. parvifolia* are fairly common, *H. hallii* and *H. richardsonii* are a bit harder to find. *Heuchera hallii* is even endemic to central

Colorado, where it is found in pine forests.

*Heuchera richardsonii* is an eastern relictual species (aka with the majority of its distribution in the east, only with a few remaining populations in Colorado). It is rare on cliff faces or in pine forests near Castle Rock and in the Black Forest. *Heuchera richardsonii* is so rare that no observations of this species in Colorado have ever been made on iNaturalist – scavenger hunt, anyone?

Another rare species, (D.) *Telesonix jamesii*, is often mistaken for *Heuchera* because of a similar vegetative growth pattern, but is quite distinct in having bright pink flowers. *Telesonix* is also rare in Colorado, where it is found on rocky granite outcroppings along the Front Range and easily mistaken for *Heuchera bracteata* when not in bloom.

See if you can locate a *Heuchera* or two, or even the rare *Telesonix*! Help Denver Botanic Gardens document the diversity of *Heuchera* in the greater metro area by photographing as many plants as possible in the month of June. Post your findings to [iNaturalist](#) so they will automatically be added to the [Denver EcoFlora Project](#).



Photos by Jennifer Ackerfield

## May EcoQuest – Aghast – An *Astragalus*!

Wow – we had 282 observations of *Astragalus* for the month of May, representing nine different species! The top observer (@dlehle) recorded 80 observations of *Astragalus* and five different species. Way to go everyone!

### What is an EcoQuest?

EcoQuests are part of the Denver EcoFlora Project. These monthly quests challenge citizens to become citizen scientists and observe, study and conserve the native plants of the Denver – Boulder metro area via iNaturalist, an easy-to-use mobile app.

### How Do I Get Started?

1. Download the iNaturalist app or register online at [iNaturalist.org](#).
2. Take photos of the plants in bloom that you find on your daily neighborhood walk. It is okay if they are weeds! Avoid taking photos of cultivated plants in gardens or in your home.

3. If you are concerned about revealing the location of sensitive plants or observations at your own house, you can hide the exact location from the public by changing the “geoprivacy” of the observation to “obscured.”
4. Post your findings on iNaturalist via the app.
5. Your observations will automatically be added to the Denver EcoFlora Project.
6. Sign up to be a member of the [Denver EcoFlora Project](#) on iNaturalist to receive updates and additional information.

### What is the Goal?

The Denver EcoFlora Project is designed to meaningfully connect citizens with biodiversity and to assemble novel observations and data on the metro area’s flora to better inform policy decisions and conservation strategies.



Photo by Scott Dressel-Martin