

Sanguinaria canadensis L.

Standardized Common Name: Bloodroot

Other Common Names: Indian Paint, Red Puccoon, Red-root, Sanguinary

Family: Papaveraceae

Parts in Commerce: Rhizome

Identification:

- 2–7 cm long, 0.5–1(–1.5) cm in diameter
- Unbranched or branching, with 1 to several short branches
- Cylindrical, slightly flattened, with blunt ends
- Roots borne on lower surface, slender, usually breaking
- Occasional inconspicuous ring-shaped leaf scars, also occasional stem scars on upper surface
- Outer surface brown; inside reddish throughout with yellow vascular bundles, or sometimes pale with numerous red resin dots
- Fracture sharp, uneven

- In cross-section, contains epidermis; narrow ring of cortex; circle of numerous small, yellow vascular bundles; large pith. Latex cells, containing reddish latex, scattered throughout cortex, pith, and rays separating vascular bundles. Cells of cortex and pith contain numerous starch grains
- Taste bitter, acrid, unpleasant

Taxonomy: *Sanguinaria canadensis* is endemic to eastern North America; it is the only species in its genus.

Description: Rhizomatous perennial herb. Rhizome 2–7 cm long, more or less cylindrical, sometimes branching, horizontally oriented, with few stem scars on upper surface, roots below; fresh rhizome and roots contain orange-red latex. Growing apex of rhizome produces 1 leaf and 1 flowering stalk per season; leaf emerges curled around flower stalk and attains mature size after time of flowering. Leaf borne on petiole 7–40 cm high at maturity; blade reniform, (5–)10–20(–28) cm broad, palmately (5–)7–9-lobed or rarely undulate; lobes irregularly shaped, blunt, the basal lobes extending backward beyond attachment to petiole; margins often slightly undulate near apex or with

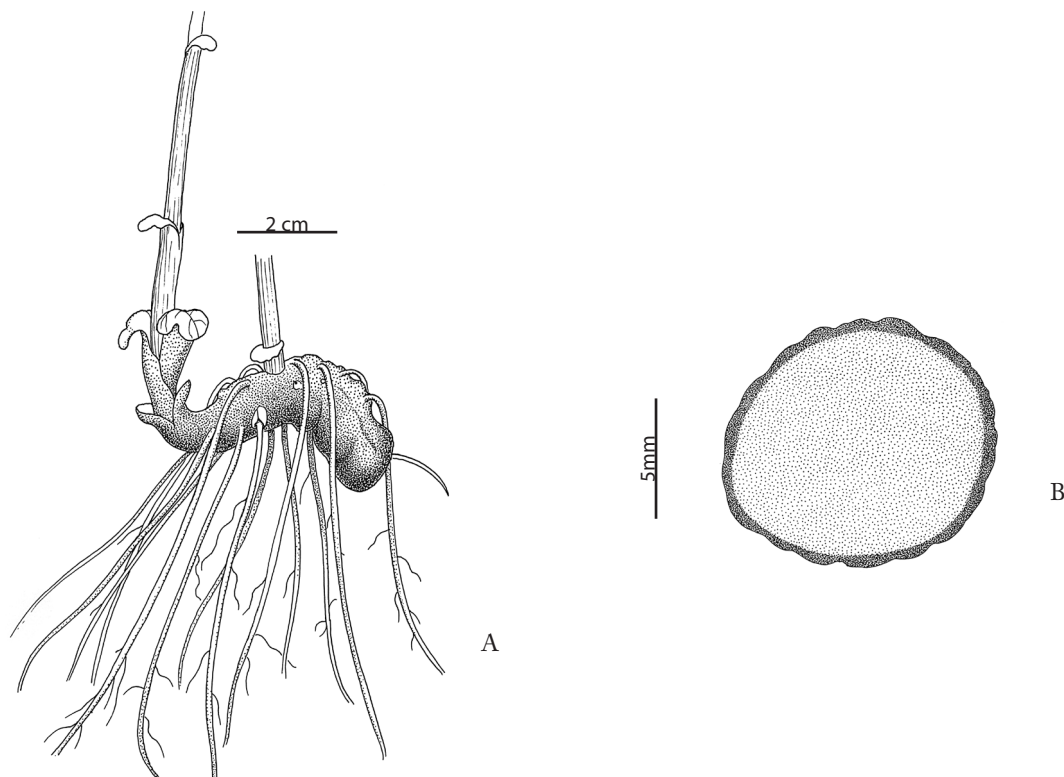


Figure 64: a–b, *Sanguinaria canadensis* whole rhizome and cross-section with resin dots.

few coarse teeth; color dark green to pale green, sometimes with glaucous underside; veins sometimes distinctly reddish, prominent on underside. Flower solitary; sepals 2, green, quickly falling; petals white or rarely pinkish, 8–12 or rarely doubled, 1.5–3 cm long; stamens numerous, yellow; ovary 1, with 2-grooved stigma. Fruit a capsule, 2.5–6 cm long, fusiform, green, drooping, 1-loculed, 2-valved, containing numerous seeds.

References:

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Radford AE, Ahles HE, Bell CR. *Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; 1968.

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