



Atlantic Province Flowers Grow in Alamosa

by Marilyn Loser

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Hundreds of ocean coves, thousands of fresh water lakes, and millions of trees cover the Atlantic provinces of Canada: Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland/Labrador. It's very wet and most of the land is not much above sea level. Most of the Atlantic Provinces have cold winters, but not as cold as ours.

Yet, on an August trip, I saw many flowers blooming that I have in my garden.

The byways and fields of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were crowded with tall stems of brilliant Canada Golden Rod (*Solidago Canadensis*). I have a couple in my garden, but mostly I have the shorter Golden Rod (*Solidago* ?). This North American native genus has more than 100 species. Golden Rod is unfairly blamed for causing hay fever. The real culprit is usually ragweed that blooms at the same time and has windblown pollen. Golden Rod's pollen is too heavy and sticky to be blown far so is mainly pollinated by insects.

Magnificent white, blue, and pink Hydrangeas graced many gardens. The shrubs grew as high as 10 feet and were covered in blossoms. I've only been successful with white Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle') and after 7 years it is only 2 ft. high. With our cold winters, it dies back to the ground each year. I give this Canadian and US native regular water and excellent soil and it rewards me with 5-inch blooms for as long as 2 months.

I was surprised to see lots of yellow and white Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) since I associate it with the southwest US. Turns out this drought-tolerant shrub is native to northern parts of the US and the Rocky Mountains as well as parts of Canada, Europe and Northern Asia. The Canadian specimens were the same size as the ones I see around Alamosa.

Many of the small villages we travelled through in Newfoundland had expanses of very green grass, few trees, and a blooming hedge of purple or purple and white Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*). I wasn't surprised to see these in the wet, harsh land, but was surprised that this was often the ONLY flower in yard after yard. There were simply no other plants that had bloomed earlier or might bloom later.

My plants are in a moist part of my garden; in fact, next to my Hydrangea! The flower is named due to its resemblance to a robed monk with cowl pulled down over the face. I was surprised to read that it is native to western and central Europe as I've seen it along streams in the San Juan and Collegiate Mountain Ranges.

We saw lots of yellow Toadflax or Butter & Eggs (*Linaria vulgaris*) in Nova Scotia. Sadly, I still have lots of this yellow, snapdragon looking flower in my garden. I used to love seeing it when hiking and purchased it for my garden 25 years ago. Back then it wasn't on Colorado's Noxious Weed list as it is today. I've tried to eradicate from my garden as it spreads profusely and out competes flowers I'd rather have. It cheerfully waved

at me from under a Gambel Oak when I returned home from travelling. It is native to most of Europe and northern Asia, but is now common in North America.

Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), with its gray foliage and small white flowers, was abundant in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It grew in dense clusters along roadsides. I no longer have any in my garden, but they looked like the ones I used to see hiking in the San Juans. In our mountains, they tended to be individual plants rather than large clumps.

Magenta phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) and tall yellow Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) were blooming in many locations. Both are native to North America and flourish in eastern Canada as well as in Alamosa. I often see Primroses along the Rio Grande in Alamosa, but only see Phlox in home gardens.

We saw lots of Bishop's Weed (*Aegopodium variegatum*) and Lupine (*Lupinus*) but they were long past bloom stage. And there were a lot of Dandelions – they only place I haven't seen them was in Antarctica!

I love viewing gardens when I travel and often look for flowers I don't find around the San Luis Valley. However, I was struck by seeing so many familiar flowers flourishing in a much different climate and blooming at the same time they do in the San Luis Valley.

Most of the flowers listed in this article are featured on AlamosaFlowers.net.

"Earth laughs in flowers." Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Hamatreya"