

***Lupinus perennis* –Lupine**

COMMON NAME: Lupine, Wild Lupine

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lupinus perennis* – Comes from the Latin word *lupus* for “wolf” because of an incorrect belief that the plant devoured the fertility of the soil. *Perennis* means “perennial”.

FLOWER: Flower stalks end with a 4-8 inch dense cluster of deep lavender pea-like blossoms about one inch long.

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late May, early June

SIZE: 1 to 2 feet tall and about as wide

BEHAVIOR: Lupine is a legume so it adds nitrogen to the soil. It may grow in a semi-prostrate position, but flower stalks are straight up. The seed pods are 1 to 2 inches long and “explode” when ripe, spreading several seeds a distance from the plant.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Needs full sun or partial shade in soil with good drainage. It does best in sandy or gravelly soil. Does well in sandy, acid soil.

NATURAL RANGE: New York west to southern Ontario and Minnesota, south to Maryland, West Virginia, northern Ohio, Indiana and northern Illinois. It occurs in northwestern and southern Wisconsin.

SPECIAL FEATURES: This is one of the few flowers that is bluish and is very showy when in bloom. The blue-green palmate leaves are also attractive. This is the only host plant for the Karner blue butterfly. It is also toxic to grazing cattle. While it appears quite similar to Texas blue bonnets, it is a different species.

SUGGESTED CARE: Do not overcrowd and do not plant in heavy soil. It will not persist where crowded by taller, more robust plants. The deep roots of mature plants make them hard to transplant, but small plants can be moved. Avoid over-watering.

COMPANION PLANTS: Often in oak barrens, prairies, old fields or roadsides with little bluestem, butterflyweed, flowering spurge, rough blazingstar, spiderwort, birdsfoot violet, dotted mint, purple prairie clover and black-eyed Susan.