



LUPINES

Lupinus (*Loo-PY-nus*). Few sights are more “downeast Maine” than fields and roadsides graced with Lupines in June and July. Hybrids of these aristocratic spires are valuable for adding a bold, vertical effect in the perennial border. Each perfect spike carries closely set pea-like blossoms. Attractive round finger-like foliage shimmers with the morning dew.

The name comes from Latin *lupus* “Wolf”, referring to the belief that these plants ravage the land, stealing its fertility. Many of the hybrid lupines were developed in the mid 20th century from crosses between *L. perennis* and *L. arboreus*. Further development by the English plantsman George Russell led to large flowered, exceptionally colorful blooms.

Try Lupines planted in masses, as specimens, and in mixed beds with Iris or *Thalictrum*.

Lupines are a short lived perennial, but will self-sow. Lupines love our cool summer evenings. Full sun. Moist, not too fertile, acidic to neutral, well-drained soil. No lime. Only young plants transplant easily due to the deep woody roots, which fix nitrogen. Deadheading may stimulate re-bloom. The seeds may cause severe discomfort if eaten.

Diseases include aphid infestations, fungal and bacterial spots, downy mildew, powdery mildew, rust, stem rot and damping off.

Lupines are available as both the species and hybrids. The hybrids offer a brilliant selection of colors from yellow to red to blue, pink, and white. The species will vary slightly in color with mostly blues and some pinks.

To start a field of wild lupines, seed can either be purchased or collected in late summer/fall after the flower heads have dried. It's as simple as cutting off the flower stalks and then shaking them around the area where you want your lupines to grow.