

Lady lupine

(*Lupinus villosus*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Lady lupine is a stunning spring bloomer endemic to the Southeastern Coastal Plain from North Carolina to southeastern Louisiana. It thrives in the deep, well-drained sandy soils of sandhill habitats. Its flowers are attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds.

Lady lupine is an herbaceous perennial with a broad spreading habit. Its leaves are elliptical to lanceolate and alternately arranged. The leaves, stems and flowers are all densely covered in silvery hairs. The flowers are born on crowded spikes and have a broad upper petal and two lower petals that are fused. They are bluish to light purplish or pink with a deep maroon spot on the upper petal.

Due to both a deep sensitive taproot and a reliance on symbiotic bacteria found in the soil of its natural habitat, Lady lupine is not easily cultivated. Even when seeds are successfully germinated, plants do not typically succeed in altered landscape environments.

Family: Fabaceae (Legume, bean or pea family)

Native range: North Florida

To see where natural populations of Lady lupine have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Well-drained sand

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: Up to 2 feet tall and spreading

Lady lupine plants are not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see them.



Photo by Emily Bell