

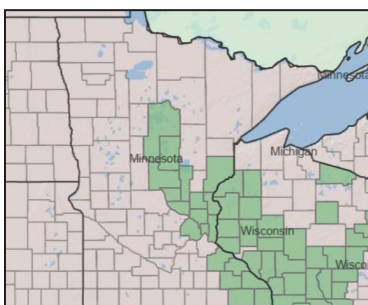
Wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)

Family: Fabaceae (Pea)

DESCRIPTION: Found in oak and jack pine savannas of eastern Minnesota, wild lupine offers wildlife benefits and can enhance most restoration sites with drier soils. Its showy blue-and-purple pealike flowers bloom in the spring.

USES: Because it is a legume, wild lupine increases nitrogen in soil, which promotes plant growth and health. The plant feeds deer, rabbits and squirrels. The only known larval host plant for the endangered **Karner blue butterfly** (pictured), wild lupine supports several other butterfly species, including the frosted elfin. Wild lupine is toxic in large quantities and is not recommended for medicinal use. Historically, it was used by Native Americans in a leaf tea to treat nausea and was fed to horses to help them gain weight.

REFERENCES:
[Minnesota Wildflowers](#)
[USDA Fire Effects Information System](#)
[U.S Forest Service](#)
[Blue Thumb Plant Finder](#)



Range Map Credit: USDA Plants Database



Planting Recommendations

Wild lupine prefers open, sunny areas with well-drained, sandy soils, but can adapt to most dry soils. It is relatively easy to start from seed. Scarify the seed coat by gently rubbing the seeds with sandpaper, and allow 10 days of cold-moist stratification before sowing in the spring — or directly sow in the fall so winter conditions will break dormancy. Because they are prone to root rot, plants started in pots do not over-winter well, and should be

transplanted during the season in which they are started. Plant 12 to 18 inches apart to avoid overcrowding. Land management techniques such as prescribed burning, mowing and mechanical thinning can benefit wild lupine populations by creating open and sunny habitat and reducing woody plant encroachment. Good companion plants include prairie smoke, prairie phlox, butterfly milkweed, wild petunia and little bluestem.

STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS:
None

ID: Spikes of blue-and-purple, occasionally white, flowers produce hairy seed pods. Flowers arise from plants, which grow up to 2 feet tall. Leaves are comprised of seven to 11 hairy leaflets radiating from a central point. One plant can have multiple 8-inch spikes.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Non-native large-leaved lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*) is larger with taller spikes of flowers, which vary in color from dark purple to pink. It has nine to 17 leaflets. The invasive plant is commonly seen in the ditches along Lake Superior's North Shore.

Developed by Shayna Vendela, a Pine County-based Pheasants Forever Farm Bill wildlife biologist

Photo Credits: Shayna Vendela

