

MOLES SEEDS

Lupin

Cultural Leaflet: ZZ242

A cottage garden favourite, Lupins are an essential part of the perennial programme. Flowering in borders when other plants are still green, they also serve to cover untidy spring bulbs. Excellent for a sunny position, with scented upright spires of flowers and palmate foliage.

Lupins are easy to raise, but care should be taken to avoid the disease *Colletotrichum*, which causes plant collapse.

For retail sales, sell as green plant with label, or can be sold in larger pots in bud/flower in the Spring.

Variety Selection

Of the perennial varieties, Moles offer the tall Russell series or the dwarf Gallery series.

Russells are well-known standard Lupins, with flower spikes reaching 100-120cm in plain or bi-colours. They are generally sown in the Summer and overwintered.

The shorter Gallery types can be flowered in the first year from an early sowing. They have been bred for compact growth so are an excellent item for production in pots. They have good disease resistance and are free-flowering, producing 10-12 flower spikes per plant in one season.

In addition, there is the Tree Lupin (*Arboreus*) which forms a shrubby bush up to 1.5 metres in height. It is fast-growing and covered in long, fragrant flowers (up to 25cm) in mid-Summer of yellow, lilac, purple and blue.

Finally, we have the annual Lupin Sunrise, a less common direct sown annual reaching a height of around 1m. It is a single stemmed Lupin with fragrant tri-coloured flowers of azure blue, white and yellow borne on spikes. Eyecatching when grown in groups and lasts well as a cut flower.

Programming the Crop

Sow April-July to overwinter, or January-February for Gallery, to flower in the Summer.

Tree Lupins can be sown in early Spring under cover.

Annual Lupin Sunrise must be sown directly where it is to flower from March to May, flowering June to August.

Propagation and Growing-on

Perennial Lupins

Sow the large seeds (around 40 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open-structured, seed sowing compost, which should be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide prior to sowing (to prevent damping-off diseases), and the trays allowed to drain. Sow either into trays, or into plug trays at one seed per station, to avoid root disturbance when pricking out. Cover the seeds with a layer of vermiculite, and cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germination takes around 7 days at 15-18°C. Keep the germinating seedlings moist at all times, and grow on at 15-18°C.

When large enough to handle, the seedlings should be ready for transfer into large-celled plug trays. (The plug-germinated plants can go straight into a 9cm pot.) Grow on at around 15°C until ready for potting up into the final container, up to a 2-litre pot.

Cool the plants down in the Autumn, overwintered plants should be kept on the dry side, under protection, such as a well-ventilated polytunnel or glasshouse. Sell as green plants with a colour label, in Spring or Autumn. Galleries sown in January can be moved on from a 9cm to a 2 or 3 litre pot for sales as flowering plants in June. Liquid feed the plants during periods of active growth.

Tree lupin

Pre-soak the seed for 24 hours in warm water and then sow in early Spring under cover. Germination should take place within a couple of weeks. When they are large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and plant them out in early Summer. It should also be possible to sow the seed in situ in mid to late Spring.

Annual Lupin

Sow seed directly where it is to flower, March-May. Sow 6mm deep in drills 30cm apart - seedlings should not require thinning. Optimum germination 18-30°C. Seedlings should emerge within 18-21 days.

Lupins prefer full sun in well drained soil.

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Pest and Disease

Maintain good air movement through the crop, and water in the morning rather than the evening to keep the foliage dry and lessen attack by Botrytis.

Anthrachnose (Colletotrichum) is currently the number one problem associated with Lupin production; apparently healthy plants can collapse and die at quite an advanced stage. Gallery Seed is supplied treated with a fungicide, but it is very important to pay good attention to glasshouse hygiene at all stages, using only fresh trays, pots, compost, water and clean bench tops and standing-out areas. As an extra precaution, plants can be stood out in small batches in different locations around the nursery.

Aphids commonly infest Lupins - spray accordingly, according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

Crown rot, where the base of the plant rots, is usually caused by excessive water. Dig up and remove the rotted plants.

Slugs and snails will attack Lupin seedlings.

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.

(06/19)