

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)



Plant Information

Size: 48" H

Flower Color: Intense
Scarlet

Bloom Time: July-Sept

Light Exposure: full sun or
very light
shade

Soil Requirements: Moist -
never
dry

Zones: 2-7

Notes: In late summer the brilliant scarlet of Cardinal Flower flashes from the marshes, stream banks and low woods. Called "America's favorite" and "spectacular", its extremely showy blossoms can be recognized at considerable distance. Few native plants have flowers of such intense color as this common herbaceous perennial.

The blossoms are delicate, gradually opening from bottom to top on two to four foot spikes. Five petals are united into a scarlet two-lipped corolla. The lower lip has three very prominent lobes; the upper lip has two small ones. Five stamens are joined forming a red tube around the style and are topped by bearded anthers which form a mustache-looking brush.

Beneath the flower spikes are numerous dark green leaves, tapered at both ends. A moderately tall plant, stout and erect, it is the favorite of our ruby-throated hummingbird, who obliges as a pollinator. The many seeds come in two-celled pods which open at the top.