

Silvery Lupine (*Lupinus argenteus*)

One of the most identifiable flowers in Central Oregon is the lupine. A member of the pea family, it has spreading, narrow multiple leaflets forming a hand-like shape (referred to as palmately compound). The inflorescence (cluster of flowers) is composed of numerous flowers at the end of the stalk, usually arranged in whorls.

Lupine species are often very closely related, so there is some cross pollination and interbreeding, creating hybrids that make it difficult to identify. There are at least two dozen lupine species that can be found throughout the state. Two of those—Silvery Lupine and Silky Lupine—are very similar, having leaves with soft silver hairs, approximately the same bloom time (late spring through mid-summer) and color (blue-to-lavendar), and generally the same size. The Silky Lupine (*Lupinus sericeus*), however, prefers full sun and is found in grasslands and desert as well as forest, while the Silvery Lupine is more of a forest dweller. Both, however, have been reported to grow in almost any ecosystem.



The Silvery Lupine can be found generally in the drier parts of the West Coast, from British Columbia south through California. On our site it is scattered throughout the shady forested areas, with a large and conspicuous grouping next to the paved pathway that connects Skyliners Road to the building and along the west end of the upper parking lot. Plants are up to a foot or so in height, but over time can reach three feet or more.

Lupine are a favorite plant of butterflies and pollinating insects and are grazed by wildlife. However, many species are toxic to humans and domestic livestock.