


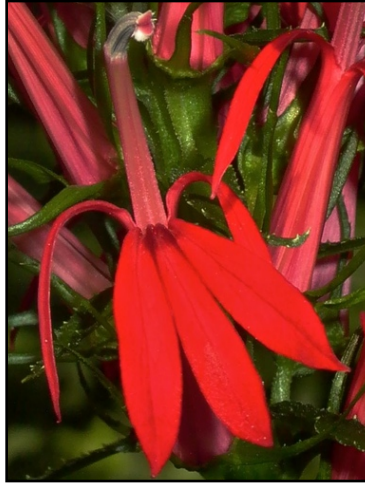
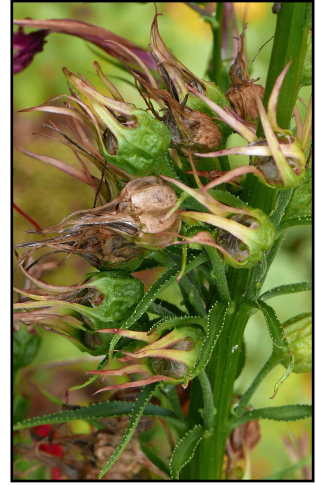

Lobelia cardinalis

Cardinal Flower

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

This lovely wildflower, a hummingbird favorite, shines with brilliant scarlet flowers. Its natural habitat is floodplain forests, swamps, and wet meadows throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region.* The Virginia Native Plant Society honored Cardinal Flower as Wildflower of the Year in 1991.



Perennial	Flowers,** Developing Fruit, Basal Rosettes
Height: 2–6 feet	
Spread: 1–2 feet	
Bloom Color: Red	
Characteristics	 
Clump-forming perennial w/ rigid, erect, leafy stems	
Alternate , lanceolate , irregularly serrate, mostly glabrous leaves; petioles reduced upward	
Protandous , tubular, bilabiate flower (2-lobed upper lip/3-lobed lower lip) w/ 5 fused stamens forming tube around style & 2-lobed stigma ; apical racemes bloom July to Oct; broadly ovoid capsules follow	
Basal offshoots; short-lived so allow to self-seed	
Attributes	
Tolerates wet soil and rabbits; no serious pests or diseases; deer seldom severely damage except for young plants	
All parts poisonous to humans if eaten in large quantities; also toxic to cats, dogs, horses, etc.	
Attracts hummers & swallowtails to nectar, Halictid bees to pollen; larval host to ~6 lepidopterans	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Humus -rich soil	<i>Canna</i> cultivars
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Crocasmia</i> - Coppertip
Water Requirements : (consistently) Moist, Wet	<i>Gladiolus</i> - Gladiola
Afternoon shade preferred in warmer climates	<i>Lychnis chalcedonica</i> - Maltese Cross
Divide clumps in spring or fall	Lythrum salicaria - Purple Loosestrife
Place mulch under the basal leaves; keep basal rosettes free of leaves, debris, or other cover in winter	<i>Pentas lanceolata</i> - Egyptian Star Flower (annual)
Use in hummingbird, rain, or woodland gardens	*It is native to DC and common in DE. It is present throughout MD and PA. It is frequent throughout VA.
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–9b	** A ruby-throated hummingbird sipping nectar.

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Bill Buchanan (top), John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, by Mary Free (middle), Shade Garden, and by Elaine Mills (bottom), U.S. National Arboretum