

Plant "Imagination"

Lobelia cardinalis



Lobelia cardinalis, commonly called cardinal flower is a Missouri native perennial which typically grows in moist locations along streams, sloughs, springs, swamps and in low wooded areas. A somewhat short-lived, clump-forming perennial which features erect, terminal spikes (racemes) of large, cardinal red flowers on unbranched, alternate-leaved stalks rising typically to a height of 2-3' (infrequently to 4'). Tubular flowers are 2-lipped, with the three lobes of the lower lip appearing more prominent than the two lobes of the upper lip. Finely-toothed, lance-shaped, dark green leaves (to 4" long). Late summer bloom period. Flowers are very attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, but not cardinals. White and rose colored forms are also known.

Specific epithet means scarlet or cardinal red.

Common name is in reference to the red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals.

Easily grown in rich, medium to wet soils in full sun to part shade. Needs constant moisture. Tolerates brief flooding. Soils should never be allowed to dry out. Tolerates full sun in northern climates, but appreciates part afternoon shade in hot summer climates of the lower Midwest and South. Root mulch should be applied in cold winter climates to protect the root system and to prevent root heaving. Mulch will also help retain soil moisture.