

Russell lupin

Lupinus polyphyllus

Family Fabaceae



Identification

- Perennial species.
- Long colourful flowerheads appear from September to February.
- Flowers are pea-like and come in a variety of colours.
- The leaves are divided into green leaflets, splayed out like fingers on a hand.
- Stout seed pods explode in the summer heat, releasing many dark brown seeds.



Russell lupin. Photo: A. Paltridge (DOC)



Russell lupin flowerhead. A. Paltridge (DOC)

Where is it found?

In Canterbury Russell lupin is a common garden plant that can also be found growing along road sides and in braided riverbeds.

Why is it a problem?

Russell lupin can be an aggressive weed, damaging to both native flora and fauna. Russell lupins are adapted to living in challenging environments such as braided riverbeds, where they form dense stands. The roots hold the gravels together, forming stable areas. The river then erodes the edges of these stable areas forming steep banks, causing the river to form deep fast-flowing channels unsuitable for wading birds to feed in. Dense stands of lupins also shade out and displace unique native braided river plant communities.

What can you do?

Russell lupin has no official status in Canterbury. To help halt the spread of Russell lupin into our valuable braided riverbed ecosystems and waterways;

- Refrain from buying or planting Russell lupin seeds or plants if you live close to a waterway.
- Avoid picking or transporting lupin seed-heads between places.
- Inform others of the negative impacts Russell lupins have on our braided river ecosystems.



Russell lupin growing in a braided riverbed. Photo: A. Paltridge (DOC)