

# Blue Ridge Buckbean/ Carolina Lupine



## *Thermopsis caroliniana*

Also known as *Thermopsis caroliniana* and commonly called Carolina lupine, southern lupine, Aaron's rod, Blue Ridge golden-banner, hairy false lupine or Carolina bushpea.

The common name Aaron's rod refers to the staff or stave carried by Moses's brother, Aaron, in the Torah or Old Testament. The staff is said to have magically budded. It may have looked somewhat like the slender flower racemes of *Thermopsis villosa*. Ranges from Maine to Georgia and west to Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama. Plants are indigenous to the Appalachian Mountains of Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina but have been introduced into other states. This species is most likely to be found in woodland clearings, open meadows, prairies, road banks and disturbed fields.

- **Use:** An upright clumping perennial with bright green clover-like foliage. In early summer, plants are topped by spires of buttery yellow pea-shaped flowers. Plants thrive in sunny gardens with average well drained soils and are durable and long lived after establishment. Bees and butterflies seek nectar and pollen from the flowers.
- **Exposure/Soil:** Grows best in full sun in well drained rich moist soil. Plants are somewhat tolerant of heat and drought and sandy or clay loam.
- **Growth:** Blooming plants are up to 5' tall with 2-3' spread.
- **Hardiness:** Zone 3-9 perennial.
- **Foliage:** Deciduous. Foliage is bright green and trifoliolate with three oval leaflets in each leaf. Leaflets are 2-3" long with hairy lower surfaces.
- **Flower:** In late spring or early summer, spikey racemes of yellow florets rise above the foliage. Each floret is about 3/4" long and pea-like. They evolve into flat oblong hairy pods.

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