

It's a Gardener's World!

Flowers are one of the most wonderful creations that Mother Nature has ever gifted to mankind. Lupins are a cottage-garden favourite, offering height and colour to the middle of a border in May and June. Often seen carpeting meadows and mountainsides, these striking native wildflowers make superb ornamental plants in both formal and informal gardens. They bear impressive, pea-like flowers, which are loved by bumblebees & they make a perfect cut flower. At my nephew's 'Covid-19' wedding last weekend, his beautiful bride chose a bouquet of Lupins in lieu of the bouquet she'll be carrying when they have their full celebration next year. It looked stunning. Lupine flowers symbolize **happiness, creativity and imagination**.



If you're looking for a showy summer-flowering perennial that will stand out from the crowd, lupine is a sure front-runner. The tall, lush spires of vividly coloured flowers are like floral traffic cones, compelling you to slow down and take notice. The genus name comes from the **Latin word for wolf ("lupus")**, due to the mistaken belief that these plants depleted minerals from the soil with a tendency to ravage the land on which they grow. In fact, they attract an array of beneficial pollinators to the garden, including bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies, and hummingbirds &, like other members of the pea (Legume) family, lupine can improve soil fertility by fixing nitrogen in the air and making it usable by other plants.

Slow Down, Take Notice – that's my message for today. The story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand reminds us that we need to 'see the need' and then do what we can to 'meet the need'.

Surrounded by a crowd of hungry people, Jesus miraculously feeds them all. Jesus actually passes the challenge of feeding the crowd on to the disciples. Their suggestion that the people should be sent to find food is perfectly sensible, but Jesus challenges them to provide what is needed. The disciples must have felt utterly incapable of doing what Jesus asked of them, but they faithfully do what they can, and Jesus works a miracle through their efforts. So, there is hope here for all of us who ever feel powerless to do what Jesus is asking of us. This passage is a reminder of how God provided manna in the wilderness. Matthew does not labour this, but the fact that he describes the place as a wilderness emphasises the link. The passage from Isaiah also speaks of God's people needing provision in the wilderness. In both there is the stirring of liberation, of the coming together of people for the journey on which God will take them. Both stories talk of God's people being equipped to meet the needs of those around them.

A new week lies ahead of us and we don't really know what it will bring. May we slow down, take notice & be aware of people around us who are struggling in any way. May we be sensitive to their needs and seek your wisdom as we come alongside them. May we be there for them, bearing the Lord's Blessing.