

Planting Bulbs

Many of our early-flowering bulb species supply much-needed nectar and pollen to insects freshly emerged from hibernation. Insects such as queen bumblebees wake up in early spring and must feed to build up their energy stores.

Bulbs help to enhance the garden at a time when a little colour goes a long way, and nectar and pollen for insects is in short supply. The best bulbs for our insects are ones with a flower shape which enables access for them.

We always promote native plants as the best option to encourage wildlife to your garden, although non-native flowers can still provide a source of nectar and pollen.

Snowdrops

Galanthus nivalis

Are they native? We don't really know. Botanists have been discussing this for a long time. It's most likely these pretty white flowers were introduced a few hundred years ago and have since proliferated across the country.

What's for sure is their value to wildlife - they flower very early in the year, which means they are particularly helpful for honeybees. They are also guaranteed to brighten up your garden, even in the depths of January!

Snowdrops require shade and damp soil and are typically associated with woodland.

Did you know?

The flowering of snowdrops is one of the first signs that winter is coming to an end. As a result, the flower has long been viewed as a symbol of hope for better times ahead.



Daffodils

Narcissus pseudonarcissus

The earliest daffodils begin to flower in March, and our native daffodil is worthy of a place in any garden.

N. pseudonarcissus still survives in the wild in some quantity, especially in the border counties between England and Wales and in the Lake District. When introduced to the garden it will seed and spread rapidly, eventually creating wonderful swathes of bright yellow flowers which are rich in nectar and pollen.

Plant daffodils in moist soil in wood or meadow.



Did you know?

The wild daffodil got its Latin name, *Narcissus*, from an Ancient Greek myth. *Narcissus* fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, becoming so obsessed that he fell in and drowned. The nodding head of the wild daffodil embodies *Narcissus* bending over the water and it's said that the first flower sprang from where he died.

Bluebells

Hyacinthoides non-scripta

A sure sign spring is in full swing! These bell-shaped perennial herbs will flower from April onwards. Woodland butterflies, bees, and hoverflies all feed on their nectar. Some bee species even steal the nectar from bluebells by biting a hole in the bottom of the flower, reaching the nectar without the need to pollinate the flower.

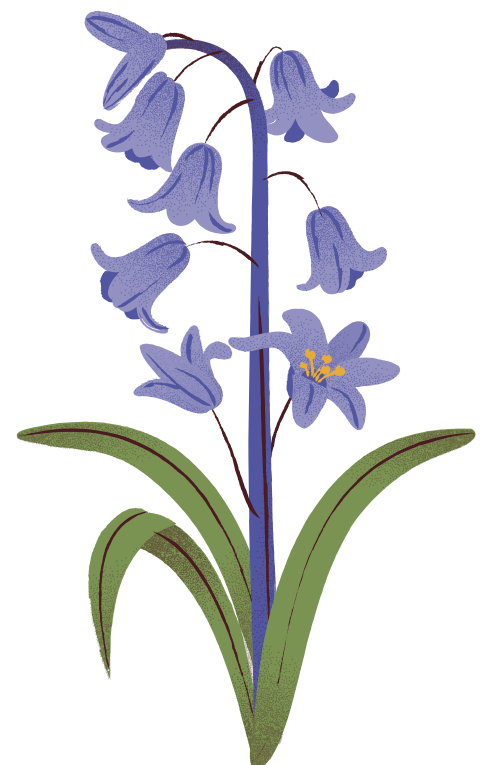
The UK's woodlands are home to almost 50% of the world's population of the bluebell.

One of the biggest threats to our native bluebells is hybridisation with non-native Spanish bluebells. These offer far less value to our wildlife. If you would like to plant bluebells in your garden, be sure to pick the native variety. This will help protect our native bluebells, and provide food and shelter for a range of our native insects, from bees to butterflies.

Bluebells need a damp shady spot, ideally where they won't be disturbed.

Did you know?

Bluebells' sticky sap was once used to bind the pages of books and glue the feathers onto arrows.



Planting Guide

Most spring flowering bulbs should be planted in September, October, or November.

We think these flowers look their best when naturalised in drifts amongst grass. The easiest way to create this effect is to scatter the bulbs randomly on the ground and plant them exactly where they fall. Once established, many will self-seed and more of the flowers will grow in areas of your garden.

- **English Bluebell** - 10cm deep, 10cm apart, point up
- **Wild Daffodil** - 10cm deep, 10cm apart, point up
- **Snowdrops** - 5-10cm deep, 10cm apart, point up
- **Crocus** - 10cm deep, 7cm apart, point up
- **Wild Cyclamen** - plant very shallow, the point 3-5cm below the surface
- **Wood Anemone** - plant these twig-like rhizomes (stems that grow underground) 7cm deep, horizontally, and 15cm apart

