



Wildlife Trust for  
**Beds, Cambs  
& Northants**

# Amazing bluebells

Nearly half of the world's bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, grow in the UK – and some of the best native bluebell woods are found in the area covered by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. This is great for all of us who enjoy seeing them, but it also puts their future in our hands.

## How to help...

- 🦋 Stick to the paths when walking through the woods and taking pictures – this might mean embracing puddles, so prepare for mud!
- 🦋 Leave the flowers where they are for everyone to enjoy – no picking
- 🦋 Appreciate their beauty and help us spread the word, so everyone is invested in their continued protection
- 🦋 Plant only native bluebells, not the Spanish variety (see right), in your own garden. The two are interbreeding, which could mean eventual extinction of the native species

## Did you know...

- 🦋 The bluebell has many names, including Cuckoo's Boots, Lady's Nightcap and Witches' Thimbles
- 🦋 71% of native bluebells are found in broadleaved woodland or scrub
- 🦋 It is against the law to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy bluebells
- 🦋 Bluebell bulbs produce an extremely sticky substance which was once used to stick the pages in books and the feathers on arrows
- 🦋 Sheep and cattle can cause considerable harm by grazing on bluebell leaves, as can muntjac deer
- 🦋 It takes at least five years for a seed to grow into a bulb
- 🦋 Bluebells are an important early food flower for bees, hoverflies and butterflies; the plants rely on them for pollination
- 🦋 Trampled bluebells will die from being crushed
- 🦋 Bluebells are a key indicator species for ancient woodlands, which means bluebell woods are likely to date back to at least 1600 and may be much much older



Native bluebells

GREG BELCHER



Spanish bluebells

RITA COANRI

### Native bluebells:

- Darker, drooping flowers mostly along one side of the stem
- White pollen
- Rich scent

### Spanish bluebells:

- Paler flowers all around an upright stem
- Blue pollen
- No scent

### Find out more...

[wildlifebcn.org/bluebells](http://wildlifebcn.org/bluebells)

*Help us to look after your local bluebell woods*

**Join the Wildlife Trust BCN**  
**[www.wildlifebcn.org/membership](http://www.wildlifebcn.org/membership)**

