



Native bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

A bulbous perennial, our indigenous species is native to north-western Europe, where it seems to prefer slightly acidic soils and partial shade. Early in the growing season, they can be a dominant species in coppiced woods on light soils, but they are also found on hedge-banks, and sea-cliffs. The native bluebell's deep violet-blue flowers have a strong sweet scent, and the flower stems droop or nod distinctively to one side.



Hybrid bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica x non-scripta*

The Spanish bluebell can readily cross-breed with the native bluebell to form the fully fertile hybrid. The hybrid was first recorded in the wild in the UK in 1963, and is also extremely common in gardens. Hybrid plants can demonstrate characteristics of both the native and Spanish bluebells.



Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*

This species, native to Portugal and western Spain, was first introduced in British gardens as an ornamental plant in the 1680s. It was favoured over the native because it can grow almost anywhere and has bolder blooms. This is a more upright plant than the native bluebell. Its flowers range in colour from pale to mid blue, or white or pink, and has characteristically deep blue pollen. The Spanish bluebell was first recorded in the wild in the UK in 1909. This species is often confused with the hybrid and has therefore probably been over-recorded by botanists in the past.

Removing Spanish or hybrid bluebells from your land

Should you wish to dig up the non-native variety of bluebell from your garden or land, please dispose of them carefully. Plantlife International recommends that they are dug up once the plants have finished flowering, with their leaves intact and left in the sun to dry out for as long as a month. This will ensure that the bulb has been killed. Only when bulbs are dead should they be composted. Composting bulbs before they are

dead could lead to inadvertently propagating them. Please remember the law regarding wild plants – it is only legal to dig up wild plants on your own land so do not attempt to remove Spanish or hybrid bluebells from land owned by others.

Leaves less than 15mm wide. Flowers narrow straight sided bells that smell strongly in warm weather. Petal strongly rolled back. Anthers white.

Leaves 15-25cm wide. Flower spike only droops slightly. Petals slightly rolled back.. Bell has some flaring 10-20mm wide at the end. Anthers pale blue.

Leaves 15-35cm wide. Flower spike stiff and upright. Flowers an open bell with little rolling back of the petals. No scent. Anthers blue.