

Bluebell survey 2011

We would like you to search for the first bluebells to flower and then send your observations to us online. Look for them anywhere you can, in your garden, local park, hedgerows or woodlands.

Remember, do not pick bluebells without the landowner's permission. Print out this form and use it to record details of your bluebells while you are out in the field.

Enter your findings into the recording form online at www.nhm.ac.uk/bluebells or send a copy to Bluebell survey 2011, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD.

If you can't fill in all the details, don't worry. Your information will still be of use.

Tips

When deciding whether your bluebells are natives or not, always look at the youngest open flowers, at the top of the spike, when you are checking pollen colour and flower scent. See the identification key below or refer to 'Identifying your bluebells' online.

Time and place	
Select a clump and record clump-specific data	
Date of observation:	_____ Day _____ Month
Date when bluebells first flowered in your area:	_____ Day _____ Month
Location:	_____
Additional location info:	<input type="checkbox"/> Place name <input type="checkbox"/> Postcode <input type="checkbox"/> Grid reference
Habitat:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ancient woodland <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland <input type="checkbox"/> Hedgerow <input type="checkbox"/> Park or garden <input type="checkbox"/> Wasteland
Pollen	
What colour is the pollen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Creamy-white <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Other identifying features	
Do the flowers have a strong sweet smell?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are the flowers narrowly tubular with the petals strongly recurved?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the flower spike nodding at the tip?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Pollinators – was anything visiting your flowers?	
(optional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bee <input type="checkbox"/> Beetle <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly <input type="checkbox"/> Fly <input type="checkbox"/> Moth <input type="checkbox"/> Wasp <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Identification key	

The easiest way to tell the difference between native and non-native bluebells is to look at the colour of the pollen.

If it is creamy-white then the bluebell is a native. If it is any other colour, such as pale green or blue, then it is definitely not native.

Be careful. When the pollen is shed, the empty anther can be a pale cream colour, so make sure you look at the most recently opened flowers at the top of the spike, to find the true colour of the pollen.

Other methods

There are several other ways of distinguishing between native and non-native bluebells. If you have a native then you should be able to answer yes to these questions:

1. Do the flowers have a strong sweet smell?
2. Are the flowers narrowly tubular with the petals strongly recurved?
3. Is the flower spike nodding at the tip?

For all of these questions it is important to look at plants when they start flowering and at flowers which have just opened. Older flower spikes are less unidirectional and more upright, the pollen may be lost and the flowers could have lost their scent.

Check the online glossary for help with any of these terms.

I think the specimen is:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Native bluebell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Non-native bluebell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know |

Your comments

If you would like to give any feedback about this survey, and haven't already done so, please provide your comments here.