



Snowdrops & Bluebells

- The first reference to snowdrops in our gardens dates back to 1597.
- Carl Linnaeus who in 1754 named them Galanthus Nivalis, meaning “milk flower of the snow” in Greek/Latin.
- Snowdrops were anciently known as “Candlemas bells”, reflecting their traditional flowering time around early February time.
- A new variety named Galanthus Elwesii was first introduced in 1874 from Turkey.

Snowdrop Q&A:

1. How often should I divide my clumps of snowdrops?
You can leave them to grow bigger and flowering should not be restricted for many years. Dividing them every two years can improve your stocks quickly. For the best results, divide them immediately after flowering, whilst the leaves are still green.
2. Why aren't my snowdrops multiplying?
This could be because you are growing them in hard, dry, clay soil and are being baked in the sun. Snowdrops are best under trees and shrubs due to the lack of light.
3. What is the best type of soil for snowdrops?
Snowdrops will grow in most garden soils, but will not if the soil is dry for long periods. Also maintain levels of organic matter, as soils low in organic matter will produce poorer results.
4. Are snowdrops worth cutting and bringing indoors?
As long as you've got enough in the garden display, then yes! Warm indoor air helps release the scent of flowers, so they'll smell stronger. To make them last as long as possible cut as much stalk off with the flowers as you can and keep them cool. Try not to remove the leaves, as that weakens the bulbs.
5. How close to trees can I plant snowdrops?
Don't plant them too close as snowdrops do not do well in heavy shade. So it is best to plant snowdrops towards the edge of the tree canopy. This also makes planting easier because the soil will not be as dry or as full of roots.

Snowdrop Tips:

- Avoid planting snowdrop on its own, as they're much better in small clumps. This will produce a better and more visual display.
- You will need to water and look after snowdrops after moving/planting them.
- To divide an existing clump, dig it up and split it. Put half back in the same hole, so there's still a substantial clump. Then take the other half and split again. This is the best way to form big patches quickly.

Easy As 1.2.3 – Snowdrops:

1. Lift them – Snowdrops will spread to create a carpet across your garden. To encourage this, and keep them healthy and vigorous, divide clumps as the flowers fade.

2. Divide them – Tease the clumps apart by hand, taking care not to tear the root structure. Once you have separated them into clusters of 3-5 bulbs, replant them.
3. Replant them – Make fresh planting holes nearby, leaving space for the clumps to grow again (about 15cm apart). Improve the soil before planting with compost for best results.

English, Spanish and Hybrid bluebells – How to spot the difference:

- What colours are the flowers?
Native species' flowers are a deep blue, whilst Spanish bluebells tend to have pale-blue/pink flowers.
- Do the flowers have any scent?
The native bluebell has a strong sweet smell; Spanish ones are not scented.
- What shape are the flowers?
Flowers of native bluebells are narrow and tubular, with the tips of the petals rolled back. Whereas the Spanish bluebells are more bell shaped.
- How are the flowers arranged?
The native bluebell has flowers on mostly one side of the stem. Spanish bluebells tend to have them arranged around the whole stem.
- What colour is the pollen?
Native bluebells have creamy white pollen, while Spanish bluebells have pale green/blue pollen.
- What shape are the leaves?
The native bluebell has narrow leaves that are pointed at the tip; whereas Spanish ones have much broader leaves with a rounded tip.

Hybrids are between the two, as they are very common and share the characteristics of both the Native and Spanish plants.