

Bluebell

Hyacinthoides non-scripta



Description

Bluebell is the well-known flower of our woodlands and creates a blue wash of colour that carpets the woodland floor in late April and May. Often picked by children in the past, the Bluebell is now protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

The Bluebell is a widespread and popular plant of ancient and semi-natural woodlands and is a species most associated with well-managed woodlands, in particular, coppiced woods. The UK is thought to hold at least 20% of the global population. The Bluebell is found mainly in the western part of the borough where ancient and semi-natural woodlands occur. It is located in 103 one kilometre squares in the borough (26.6% of total woodland area). *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* should not be confused with Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica* which is found in many urban gardens and is a threat to our native species through hybridisation.

National Status

The better Bluebell woodlands in the country occur in natural and semi-natural habitats and are well represented in managed and, particularly, coppiced woodlands.

A national decline has occurred, due to some loss of woodlands but, possibly, also due to the overplanting of ancient woodland sites with conifers. Such overplanting causes continuous shading and, hence, conditions unsuitable for Bluebells.

Collecting of Bluebells for commercial use has been a problem in some parts of the country.

Local Status

Bluebells are located in natural and semi-natural woodland throughout the borough. They are found in 26.6% of the total woodland area of the borough.

Legal Status

The Bluebell is now protected as a schedule plant species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

Links with other Action Plans

- HAPI Upland Oakwood
- HAP2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- HAP5 Hedgerows

Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Overplanting Bluebell abundant woodlands with conifers causing loss through shading.
- Unmanaged woodlands contribute to the decline of the plant.
- Invasive species such as bracken (in unmanaged areas) or lack of traditional coppicing management will cause a decline of Bluebell.
- Collecting Bluebell for commercial use.

Current Local Action

- Increasing implementation of appropriate management of some woodland areas.
- Some local recording is being carried out by naturalists and individuals.

Proposed Local Action

- Produce a map and supporting document with information on all known Bluebell sites in the borough.
- Continue to expand knowledge of the occurrence of Bluebell by seeking additional data.
- Where possible, survey the known Bluebell sites close to human habitation to assess whether or not Bluebell are under threat from garden Spanish Bluebell.

BMBC Land Ownership and Management Actions

- Barnsley MBC countryside sites to be managed so as to be sympathetic to Bluebells – eg. no major silvicultural works April–July.