

North country blues

Don't miss spring's most dazzling display of wildflowers. Here's where you can find spectacular spreads of woodland bluebells in the north of the UK

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WOODLAND
TRUST

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Hackfall, Yorkshire, inspired Sabine Reinhart's cover illustration



HACKFALL

Ripon, Yorkshire

Situated in the partial shade of a steep gorge, Hackfall offers blankets of bluebells in spring, plus waterfalls, grottos and follies among the oak, beech, sycamore and ash. Choose 30-minute walks or a day-long hike through the site.

SEA WOOD

Ulverston, Cumbria

This remarkable wood offers a sea view, as it rests beside the shingle beach at Ulverston Sands, Morecambe Bay. Oak timbers from Sea Wood were once floated at high tide to Ulverston for use in shipbuilding.

BALMACAAN

Drumnadrochit, Scotland

Bluebells are also known as wild hyacinths in Scotland and they bloom later in the cooler climate. You can find them in this wood beside Loch Ness as well as some of Britain's largest specimens of Wellingtonia, Lawson's cypress and Douglas fir.

CLYDE VALLEY

Scotland

In the glacier-carved gorges of the Clyde valley, woods have been growing since the end of the ice age. There are six deciduous woods of oak, ash, rowan and hazel to explore along the valley from Hamilton to New Lanark, with bluebells, ramsoms (wild garlic) and wood anemones opening in spring.

PREHEN WOOD

Near Derry, Northern Ireland

This ancient wood overlooking Derry and the river Foyle is one of the Woodland Trust's top 10 sites for seeing bluebells. If you're lucky on a visit, you may also spot a rare red squirrel, or even a sparrowhawk or long-eared owl in the trees.

THE SHRUBBERY

Near Wadworth, Doncaster

This wood was once part of the 18th-century estate Wadworth Hall, and to this day it still hides several of the grounds' features, including a Ha-Ha wall,

a fishpond and the four Gospel Wells. A visit during springtime offers the promise of bluebells, blackthorn blossom and the scent of ramsoms.

RAGPATH WOOD

Esh Winning, County Durham

Joined to the village of Esh Winning by the Deerness Valley Walk, this mixed woodland boasts a gorgeously scented carpet of bluebells in spring, with ramsoms, wood anemones and wood sorrel spreading from the banks of the river.

IRTHING GORGE WOODLAND

Gilsland, Northumberland

Irthing Gorge was worn by the flow of the river Irthing, which now divides Cumbria from Northumberland. On its steep banks, this ancient woodland provides habitat for badgers and both red and grey squirrels as well as glades for bluebells. Take a walk to the head of the river and the impressive Crammel Linn waterfall - rated as one of the UK's best wild swimming spots.