

Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

1-2' spring ephemeral, upright and clump forming.

Native NY south, found in moist rich woods, river floodplains

Loose clusters of pink buds and flowers change to fragrant nodding sky-blue bells, hanging on arching leafy stalks. Flowers appear sequentially over several weeks, March-May.

6" smooth oval leaves emerge deep purple, then turn blue-green when exposed to

Part sun to shade. Spring sun and summer shade ideal, i.e. under deciduous trees. Well-drained soil, moist in spring. Can tolerate drought in summer. Foliage dies to the ground by mid-summer as the plant goes dormant, so it's helpful to interplant with ferns, etc. in borders.

Spectacular in masses, in woods, with wildflowers.

18th century garden writers commonly referred to the flowers as "Jefferson's blue funnel flowers" because Thomas Jefferson grew them at Monticello, his home.

Attracts long-tongued bees, including honeybees, bumblebees, Miner bees. Provides nectar to hummingbirds, butterflies, skippers, and Sphinx moths, including hummingbird moths.

Photos 1, 3: Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Garden
rotarybotanicalgardens.org/bluebells-are-peaking-out/

Photo 2: Christian Hummert (Ixitixel)
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mertensia_virginica_(Flower).jpg)

File:Mertensia_virginica_(Flower).jpg
Photo 4: David G. Smith, Delaware Wildflowers
delawarewildflowers.org/plant.php?id=1274

Photo 5: K. Chayka, Minnesota Wildflowers
minnesotawildflowers.info/flower/virginia-bluebells

Photos 6, 8: Missouri Botanic PlantFinder
mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder

Photo 7: Mount Cuba Center
mtcubacenter.org

Photo 9: Derek Anderson, Flora of Wisconsin
wisflora.herbarium.wisc.edu/taxa/index.php?taxon=4240

Photo 10: North Central Conservation District

