

Information re: Planned removal of Spanish Bluebells from Ridge Wood

What's the problem?

- As a local resident or visitor, we know how much you value the beautiful Ridge Wood nature reserve. In Spring, a particular highlight is the stunning sight of bluebells flowering in the wood.
- Unfortunately, the sight of native British bluebells in Ridge wood, like many other woods around the UK, may soon be a thing of the past.
- Our bluebells are under threat from the non-native Spanish bluebell; this species is more dominant than its UK cousin and can easily take over an area if given a chance. Another problem is hybridisation, where Spanish bluebells cross-breed with British bluebells to create a hybrid plant. These hybrids can then reproduce, further reducing numbers of the genuine British flowers.



The good – native British bluebells (deep blue colour, narrow leaves, long tubular flowers)



The bad – Spanish bluebells (paler blue or white / pink, wider leaves, bell-shaped flowers)

- This Spring (as in 2015), work will be undertaken in the woodland aiming to remove as many Spanish bluebells as possible.
- We hope that by carrying out this work now, we can preserve as many native bluebells as possible and allow them to continue to thrive in the woodland.

What you may notice

- Spanish bluebells in the woodland will be marked by trained personnel. They will then be removed in due course, either by digging them up or possibly through the use of environmentally friendly herbicides.

How you can help

- Please don't plant Spanish bluebells in your garden, as there is a high risk of them spreading into the woodland. If you already have Spanish bluebells in your garden, you could consider removing them. If you wish to do this, it is important to wait until they have finished flowering, then dig up the plants with leaves intact and leave to dry out in the sun for at least one month. Bulbs will then be dead and can be composted.
- Join us on our next Friends of Ridge Wood work day on Sunday 24th April to help with the effort to clear the woodland of its Spanish invaders! All are welcome, and no experience is necessary. Meet at the Melrose Close entrance to the woodland at 10am. See our website (www.ridge-wood.org.uk) for details.

Any questions/comments?

- Please contact us via our website (info@ridge-wood.org.uk)

Thank you!