

bluebells *Mertensia virginica*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Lamiales

Family: Boraginaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The bluebells is a perennial plant that grows from shallow roots. Its smooth, upright stems are sometimes branched and may reach two feet in height. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Leaves are oblong to oval, smooth, without teeth along the edges and up to six inches long. Flowers are arranged in clusters at the tip of the stem. The five, blue petals of each flower are united into a tube for most of their length. A flower may be one and one-quarter inches long. The fruit is a cluster of four, wrinkled nutlets.

BEHAVIORS

Bluebells may be found statewide in Illinois. This plant grows in rich woodlands, such as bottomland forests. Bluebells flowers from late March to late May.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

none

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