

Snowdrop

Galanthus nivalis



What to look for

Strap-like, blue-green leaves

Drooping white flowers

Inner flower segments have a green patch towards the tip

Only one flower per stem

Anything else is a cultivated variety



Where found

Damp woods, streamsides, meadows and shady gardens

When to look

First flowering January – March

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Did you know?

Other common names include Candlemas bells (Candlemas is 2 February), Mary's taper, snow piercer, February fairmaids and Dingle-dangle

One of the earliest bulbs to flower, most colonies in the UK reproduce by division of the bulbs and not by seed unless exceptionally mild weather encourages insect pollination. The hundreds of cultivated varieties include giant, double and rare yellow kinds, some of which change hands for significant sums

Regarded by many as a wildflower, snowdrops were not recorded as growing wild in the UK until the 1770s. Most colonies are probably garden escapees though it is still thought some may be native, particularly in southwest England

Snowdrops are certainly native to a large part of Europe, as far north as Brittany, where they grow in damp woods and meadows

A snowdrop plant may be said to look like three drops of milk hanging from a stem. This accounts for the Latin name *Galanthus* which means "milk-white flowers"

Snowdrops are one of the white flowers regarded as unlucky to bring into the house despite acceptance by the Catholic Church as a symbol of Candlemas. Some people still view them as 'death-tokens' and the flower has been described as 'a corpse in its shroud'



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