

# *Mertensia virginica*



## Plant of Merit

Species Native to Missouri

Common Name: Virginia bluebells

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Family: Boraginaceae

Native Range: North America

Zone: 3 to 8

Height: 1.50 to 2.00 feet

Spread: 1.00 to 1.50 feet

Bloom Time: March to April

Bloom Description: Blue

Sun: Part shade to full shade

Water: Medium

Maintenance: Medium

Flower: Showy

Tolerate: Deer, Rabbit, Black Walnut

**Culture** Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soils in part shade to full shade. Prefers moist, rich soils.

**Noteworthy Characteristics** *Mertensia virginica*, commonly called Virginia bluebells, is a native Missouri wildflower that occurs statewide in moist, rich woods and river floodplains. An erect, clump-forming perennial which grows 1-2' tall and features loose, terminal clusters of pendulous, trumpet-shaped, blue flowers (to 1" long) which bloom in early spring. Flower buds are pink and flowers emerge with a pinkish cast before turning blue. Smooth, oval, bluish green leaves (to 4" long). Foliage dies to the ground by mid-summer as the plant goes dormant.

**Uses** Best massed and left undisturbed in moist, shady woodland, wildflower or native plant gardens. Clumps may be sprinkled in borders or rock gardens, but, since plants go dormant in summer, they must be overplanted with annuals or used in conjunction with perennials (as ferns or hostas) which will expand as the growing season progresses.

Source: <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder>