



## **mertensia**

*Mertensia virginica*

Kingdom: Plantae  
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta  
Class:  
Order:  
Family:

### **FEATURES**

Mertensia, or bluebell, is a perennial plant which 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**

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

### **HABITATS**

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

### **ILLINOIS STATUS**

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

### **ILLINOIS RANGE**

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.  
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.