

National Trust Press Release

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Signs of spring in National Trust gardens

Spring is on the way at many National Trust places in the South West, with snowdrops being spotted at many places.

The dainty white flowers tend to bloom in January and February and pave the way for the crocuses and daffodils, which are a common sight in springtime. This humble little flower has been the top choice of flower to spot by National Trust visitors over the years with over 72% of people looking forward to spotting them in their local National Trust Garden.

Kingston Lacy, near Wimborne, Dorset, is famous for its snowdrop display. The snowdrop walk stretches through the 40-acre garden for one and a half miles. Even without the cold weather needed to encourage the snowdrops to bloom the team are starting to see a good display.

Nestled between the sleeping tree ferns in the Victorian fernery sprout bright white droplets, carpeting the beds around the twisty paths. With fun names like 'Ding Dong' and 'Heffalump' the fernery is home to over 35 different varieties. You'll spot more if you continue further down the iconic Lime Avenue and on to Lady's Walk, where Henrietta Bankes, a passionate horticulturalist, first had her gardener plant snowdrops in the early 1900s. It's also a chance to see some inspirational companion planting, from the little purple Cyclamen in the Fernery to the towering stands of yellow bamboo in the Japanese Garden.

Andrew Hunt, Head Gardener, says: 'As one of the earliest flowers of the year, snowdrops are always a particularly welcome sight and I never tire of seeing them pop up. With more than six million plants at Kingston Lacy, our display is justly famous with galanthophiles and keen photographers alike, but it's only one part of Kingston Lacy's winter gardens – there are beautiful witch hazels (*Hamamelis*) and camellias to discover as well. And it won't be long before the Parterre is filled with the colour and scent of more than 8,000 hyacinths.'

This year you can join an early morning tour to see the snowdrops before the property opens for the day and find out more about the different varieties from one of our knowledgeable volunteers. Normal admission applies, and in addition the 45-minute tour costs £10, booking is essential. Tours run from 8.45am on 12-14 and 19-21 February. See website for full details www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kingston-lacy

The parkland and garden at **Dyrham Park near Bath**, have snowdrops growing in front of the house, in the wooded terraces and through the garden. Many occur naturally with help from the garden team who lift and divide clumps of snowdrops each year to aid their spread.

At **Newark Park in the Cotswolds**, carpets of snowdrops in the borders and beds provide a mindful moment to sit and contemplate the Ozleworth Valley. With snowdrop displays increasingly popular as a family day out, visitors can enjoy these heralds of spring before warming up with a hot drink and a slice of cake from the tea pavilion.

For those who'd like to explore more of Newark Park beyond the gardens there are estate walks where you can blow off the cobwebs and take in the romantic winter views.

Snowdrops are at their best in February, and Newark reopens 3 Feb when it will be open daily from 10am – 4pm.

The garden at **Cotehele near Saltash in Cornwall**, is a garden for all seasons. At this time of year snowdrops are in abundance. Although snowdrops flower all over Cotehele, you'll find them en- masse in the Upper Garden; under trees, in the borders and peeking through the black grass on the pond in contrast to the brilliantly coloured dogwood stems. You'll also find the daffodils making an appearance with the first stems sprouting with the first daffodils providing some yellow sunshine.

Killerton's garden at Broadclyst near Exeter, is filled with pockets of cheery snowdrops. You can find them throughout the garden, near the chapel, in the parkland in front of the house, in Danes Wood and Ashclyst Forest.

The woodland garden at **Knightshayes near Tiverton in Devon** is a great place to see dainty snowdrops and hellebores, as well as early flowering camellias and rhododendron. This part of the garden has been described as 'like a sweet shop for any plant lover' - a description which holds true at any time of year.

With walking trails among the delicate scatterings of snowdrops in the Abbey's grounds, a day at **Lacock near Chippenham in Wiltshire** is a great way to get out in nature. Lacock's woodland garden is at its best in winter and spring, before the leaf canopy of the trees block out the light to the bulbs and flowers. Soon enough, under the trees you'll find, alongside snowdrops, aconite's, anemones, daffodils, snakeshead fritillaries, hellebores and one of the best displays of crocus vernus in the country.

At **Stourhead near Mere in Wiltshire**, brilliant white snowdrops can be found around the lake in this world-famous garden from February. With winding paths to follow and many shrubs lie dormant waiting for spring, you can clearly see the design of the garden created over 250 years ago.

The snowdrops at Fyne Court in Bridgewater, Somerset, cover the woodland floor in early spring and are worth a visit. They provide a fantastic display, making the woodland a photographer's dream. A number of other wildflowers are also found here, such as primrose, yellow archangel and bluebells.

Thanks to the mild maritime climate at **Trelissick, near Truro in Cornwall**, the borders are already scattered with hellebores, snowdrops and primroses, and the river views are framed and silhouetted by the budding branches in the canopies.

There are great displays of snowdrops to see as you wander the winding paths at **Trengwainton, in Cornwall**, with hundreds nestling at the base of the trees lining the Drive and Long Walk.

Please check the National Trust website before visiting and for opening times which may differ from place to place. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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Images:

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The National Trust is an independent conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people: Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, who saw the importance of the nation's heritage and open spaces and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. Today, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we continue to look after places so people and nature can thrive.

We care for more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 780 miles of coastline, 1 million collection items and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves. In 2022/23 we received 24 million visitors to our pay for entry sites. The National Trust is for everyone - we were founded for the benefit of the whole nation, and our 5.7 million members, funders and donors, and tens of thousands of volunteers support our work to care for nature, beauty, history for everyone, for ever.



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