



Wildflower Exploration

YOUR MISSION

To learn about the native wildflower **VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS**.

Plants often have lots of common names. Scientists give each plant one unique scientific name to be sure everyone is talking about the same plant. The scientific name for VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS is *Mertensia virginica*.

YOUR CLUES

Where to find it (habitat): You can find Virginia Bluebells in moist woods.

What the flowers look like: Virginia Bluebells has 5 green sepals. It has 5 blue petals that form a tube. The buds are pink.

What the leaves look like: This plant has smooth, oval-shaped leaves.

What you might find in spring: In April, the pale-gray-green leaves grow quickly and the plant begins to flower. The leaves wither and die before summer.

Interesting facts: Some visiting bees don't fly into the Virginia Bluebell's flowers. Instead, they chew a hole through the base of the joined petals to get the nectar without coming in contact with the pollen. We call these bees 'robber bees' since they don't help with pollination, but still get the nectar reward. This plant remains alive underground all winter in swollen roots.

YOUR NOTES

List two facts below that you want to share about your plant.

Fact #1. I learned... _____

Fact #2. I learned... _____

Detectives learn by asking questions. Write one question below you would like to discover about your plant.

Something I would like to discover about my plant is _____

You can email your question to our youth educator, Raylene Ludgate at RGL3@cornell.edu

Use a wildflower field guide to answer the question below. In the index of the book, look up your plant under its name Mertensia.

What is another common name for this plant? Circle the correct answer:

Georgia Bells

Virginia Cowslip

Using the picture on our website or in wildflower guide, draw a picture of your plant below:

