

## News release

**Wednesday 20 March 2013**

### **School children and Royal Parks Foundation mark First Day of Spring planting 40,000 bluebells in Hyde Park**

Hundreds of primary schoolchildren launched a new project "Green Fingers in the Park" to help the ecology of The Royal Parks today, officially marking the First Day of Spring.

Four hundred children, aged 4-11 received a special invitation to help plant 40,000 native English bluebells near the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

The initiative by the Royal Parks Foundation, the charity for London's eight Royal Parks, aims to engage youngsters with the magic of the natural world, while creating a wildflower attraction for visitors and also a new habitat for insects, birds and bees.

Sara Lom, Chief Executive of the Royal Parks Foundation, said "The children and the bluebells are the stars of the show today. However, this is the start of a much wider programme to involve our local community in supporting the magic of bulb planting across the Parks. Future plantings could include daffodils, snowdrops or cyclamen, with schools, businesses and community groups."

The Royal Parks' expert horticultural officers and the charity's education team are helping the children, pupils at London's Thomas's School in Kensington, to plant the bulbs, with additional plantings now planned as annual events.

Rob Dowling, Hyde Park's Assistant Manager said "It is great to see so many children getting involved and enjoying planting new flowers. It's a rewarding way for these children to learn about the ecology of the park. The bluebells planted today will enhance the landscape for years to come."

The bulbs, which have been generously sponsored by the children's parents, are 'in the green' (with leaves emerging), making the job of planting simpler for the youngest pupils.

Joanna Ebner, Thomas's School, Headteacher said "I am proud that our pupils are making this huge contribution to the wider community and we are showing them the way we are able to make a difference to the community. By physically planting some 40,000 bluebells, we are actively demonstrating that we think of others and we care for our environment. I am certain we will enjoy feeding the souls of many by planting bluebells in Hyde Park for us, for others, and for future generations."

When their work is done, the children are visiting the nearby Isis Education Centre to learn about life cycles in the natural world and the ecology of the Park.

“The bluebells will look like a beautiful sea of flowers. It is wonderful to be surrounded by nature even though we live in a huge city, and we think that everybody who uses the park will feel happy when they see our flowers” said Amelia, age 10

[www.SupportTheRoyalParks.org](http://www.SupportTheRoyalParks.org)

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### **Notes to editors:**

Native English bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, are being planted to try to conserve our native bluebell population. If the native bluebells continue to hybridise with Spanish bluebells, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, we risk losing this beautiful blue, scented flower forever.

### **About the Royal Parks Foundation**

The Royal Parks Foundation is the charity that helps support the magic of London’s eight Royal Parks for everyone to enjoy now and in the future.

Established in 2003, the charity reaches out to make the Parks part of more people’s lives - raising funds for a wide variety of projects from wildlife conservation and landscape restoration, to community sport art and education. Its charity registration number is 1097545; for more information, please visit [www.SupportTheRoyalParks.org](http://www.SupportTheRoyalParks.org)

### **About Hyde Park and The Royal Parks**

Every year millions of Londoners and tourists visit Hyde Park, one of the capital’s eight Royal Parks. Hyde Park covers 350 acres and is home to a number of famous landmarks including the Serpentine Lake, Speakers’ Corner and the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. The park also offers various recreational activities including open water swimming, boating, cycling, tennis and horse riding.

The Royal Parks are: Bushy Park, The Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill, Richmond Park and St James’s Park. The Royal Parks also manages Victoria Tower Gardens, Brompton Cemetery, Grosvenor Square Gardens and the gardens of 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street.

For further information please visit [www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk)

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