

# Fulligrove House Garden

Common name: **Common Snowdrop**

Botanical name: ***Galanthus nivalis***



- ❖ **Deciduous (leaves die back after flowering leaving the bulb underground)**
- ❖ **Single, often honey-scented flowers which hang downwards with 3 white outer tepals and three smaller inner ones, often with green markings**
- ❖ **Flowering season January to March (occasionally April)**
- ❖ **Narrow grey-green leaves**
- ❖ **Perennial, herbaceous bulbous plant**
- ❖ **Low growing – 7cm to 15cm tall**
- ❖ **Partial shade**
- ❖ **Hardy – can be planted anywhere, sheltered or exposed**
- ❖ **Member of the *Amaryllidaceae* family, like the daffodil**
- ❖ **Bee friendly – provides an important source of pollen and nectar in winter and early spring**
- ❖ **Find them in areas 1 and 5 of the garden**

## Did you know?

The name *Galanthus* comes from the Greek *gala* (milk) and *anthos* (flower) and *nivalis* means "of the snow", referring to the white colour of the flower and the plant's early flowering. Snowdrops are associated with the Christian festival of Candlemas, which takes place in early February.

Although widespread in woodland, hedgerows, semi-wild areas in gardens and churchyards, the snowdrop is not a native plant, having been introduced to the British Isles from southern Europe late in the sixteenth century and not recorded as a wild plant until almost two centuries later.

Most snowdrops spread as the bulbs divide and create new bulbs, but early flying bees visiting the flowers may pollinate them. If they are pollinated, the stems collapse and seed pods develop on the surface of the soil. Each seed has a small oil-rich structure called an elaiosome. This attracts ants which carry them into their nests, eat the elaiosome and discard the seeds, helping to distribute them.

The tips of snowdrop leaves are hardened to grow through frozen soil or snow, and its sap contains a form of antifreeze which prevents damage in even the most severe British winters.

Snowdrops contain a compound called galanthamine which is used in modern pharmaceuticals to manage Alzheimer's disease and is also used to relieve traumatic injuries to the nervous system.

Snowdrops are poisonous and should never be eaten.

### Sources of information

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/7568/galanthus-nivalis/details>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galanthus\\_nivalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galanthus_nivalis)

<https://www.kew.org/plants/common-snowdrop>

<https://www.fulhampalace.org/news/plant-of-the-month-february-2021/>