

# There'll be bluebells all over

**British bluebells are under threat from their Spanish sisters.**

According to conservation groups, the Spanish bluebell could replace all native bluebells within ten years. This is because the Spanish variety is capable of crossing with British bluebells and producing fertile seed that can take over populations of the native species and, eventually, make them extinct. Unfortunately, residents who have Spanish bluebells in their garden can actually perpetuate this problem since pollinating insects can transfer pollen from them to native ones in woodland nearby.

But how can you tell whether your bluebells are British, Spanish or a hybrid?

The best way to determine this is to smell them. On a warm spring day, the British bluebells are scented, but the Spanish and hybrid species are not. Additionally, Spanish bluebells are stiff and upright, whereas native ones droop to one side, and their pollen is deep blue rather than white. Also, the tips of the Spanish petals flare outwards, whilst they roll back onto the tube of the native bluebells.

If you are thinking of buying bluebell bulbs to plant in your garden, firstly examine their botanical name. The name to look out for is 'Hyacinthoides non-scripta', and avoid the other variations.



● The traditional bluebell is under threat from its Spanish counterpart (above)

## Teamwork just the job

Bournville Village Landscapes (BVL) is the name of the Trust's landscape maintenance team on the estate. Three members of the 12-strong team make up the environmental team with responsibility for duties ranging from shrub pruning to litter collection and bin emptying. They also regularly inspect the pools and streams on the estate to remove debris.

Two members of BVL work on the trees across the estate.

The majority of these works are essential jobs, identified by a tree inspection which

is carried out annually by an independent consultant. Any jobs that are deemed as health and safety work are undertaken as soon as possible with the remainder being



programmed during the year.

All of the BVL team work together between October and February to perform many winter tasks including the major operation of leaf collection on the estate. This job is undertaken on a planned basis across the Estate, beginning at Bournville Green and ending on the Bristol Road tree belt.

**Look out for a further update on other work carried out by BVL in a future edition of Outlook.**

### Are you worried about your debts?

If so, BVT and Birmingham City Council debt advice team are on hand. They can offer tenants free, independent, professional debt advice which will help you deal with your debts in an informed and proactive way.

If you'd be interested in speaking privately to a representative from the

Council debt advice team at one of BVT's offices, contact Ann Ryan, Area Housing Manager, at [annryan@bvt.org.uk](mailto:annryan@bvt.org.uk) or 0121 415 6512.

Alternatively, contact Elaine Blackburn, Area Housing Manager at the Shenley Area Office, at [elaineblackburn@bvt.org.uk](mailto:elaineblackburn@bvt.org.uk) or 0121 415 6573.

Deal  
with your  
debts

# On hand to answer your queries

## **BVT Maintenance Service Department held its second planned maintenance exhibition at the start of this year.**

Building on its successful launch last year at Dame Elizabeth Hall, January's event saw Shenley Court Hall play host to an audience of residents who will be experiencing major works this year, for example new kitchens and bathrooms or central heating.

The event was the ideal opportunity for residents to ask questions of the maintenance team who were present. A "hands-on" demonstration of all the major fittings was given. Those who attended were even able to arrange start dates for their works there and then. In addition to maintenance staff, representatives from housing, community and tenant participation were also available to discuss any other related issues. Furthermore, they reassured everyone present that they will get the support they



• BVT maintenance staff chatted with residents



need while the proposed works are carried out. BVT Maintenance Service Department would like to thank all those involved in organising the event and all the residents who attended.



## Hall together now

Last year, BVT carried out a feasibility study on the usage of the halls in Shenley. It was concluded that Shenley Court Hall, Shenley Manor Hall and Shenley Green Centre were all under-used. BVT also carried out a survey with residents and users of the halls to ask what events and activities would encourage more usage. The Shenley area is currently being redeveloped by the Trust. Although Shenley Manor Hall is closed at present, the activities of the Shenley Manor Residents' Association are still continuing. The committee has moved to Shenley Green Centre and they run bingo on Sunday evenings and have the occasional social event on Saturdays.

BVT are working with Shenley Green Centre Management Committee to ensure that the needs of the local community are met. When the Centre moves its activities to Shenley Court Hall in 2009, BVT will ensure that transport is available to support residents getting to the new Centre from Lower Shenley. Once the redevelopment is complete, BVT will work with the various organisations to ensure that the needs of the new community are met.

## Top team

BVT has created a Green Team to consider how the Trust can improve its environmental performance.

The team, made up of inter-departmental officers, will meet five or six times a year and will be chaired by Peter Roach, BVT's Chief Executive. The team will also suggest ways for residents to be better placed to play a part in reducing the damages humans cause to the planet, and it has been proposed to extend committee membership by inviting several residents to participate.

Any residents interested in attending should write or email the editor of Outlook, Alastair Flint, at [alastairflint@bvt.org.uk](mailto:alastairflint@bvt.org.uk) who will pass their names on to the appropriate person.