



**Bluebells:** In folklore, they're known as 'Fairy Flowers', and believed to be used to trap small children. It was also believed that if you wore a wreath of bluebells, you could be made to tell the truth. They're poisonous, being very dangerous to sheep and cattle grazing on them. Bluebells produce a sticky substance that was once used to stick the pages in books and feathers onto arrows. They're an important early food flower for bees, hoverflies and butterflies.

**Wild Garlic (Ransoms):** Stellar, pure white flowers that are stunning when you get up close. The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked and the garlic taste isn't anywhere near as strong as the smell suggests. Apparently they're good in stir fries and omelettes. It was grown in several parts of every farm once to prevent disease in cattle, although the flavour could make its way into the milk. Imagine, garlic flavoured milk - haven't seen that in the shops!



## Jewels of Spring

What we've got to look forward to over the next couple of months

Spring is truly an elemental time of the year, you can fully understand why the Green Man was an important part of pagan belief, the sheer abundance and vigour of nature has to be seen to be believed.

Of course, living here makes it easy for us to enjoy our lovely corner of Devon, when the sun finally makes its welcome appearance. There are certain weeks where the vibrance of golds, bronzes and greens is staggering and you can almost feel the sap surging up through trees and hedges.

Last year, with camera in hand, I ventured out across our wonderful region to take some close-up shots, because it really is fascinating getting close to wild flowers to explore the detail and symmetry.

For camera buffs, I've used a Nikon D7000, a Tamron 90mm macro lens and just natural lighting.



Comfrey



**Devon Violet:** Often seen nestling on the bank alongside primroses, this sweet scented flower can be seen as early as February. It was thought to protect you from anything evil and was often strewn around the house in mediaeval times for protection. In the 1930s, a 'Violet Train' used to run from Dawlish up to Covent Garden. Apparently 200 acres of violets were grown at Dawlish where it was once a big local industry.



**Lady's Smock (Cuckoo Flower):** Quite a leggy plant, often seen in meadows alongside the taller varieties of buttercups. Said to bloom when the Cuckoo arrives, from April till June. It's a member of the Brassicaceae family and native throughout Europe. Once very common, it's now under threat - as ever, habitat loss is the major problem. It provides food for the Orange Tip butterfly and was once used as a substitute to watercress. Said to be unlucky if brought into the house and not included in May Day garlands.



A spring oak, such a spectacular sight in the sunshine