


A silver epergne with a scalloped rim and a textured base holds a single snowdrop flower. The flower is white with a green stem and leaves. The background is a dark, textured surface.

# *Snowdrops*

Like the hallmarks that are impressed on silver and gold pieces to identify the maker, date and place of origin, so each of the 600- plus varieties of snowdrops carries distinguishing characteristics that reveal its identity

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*Galanthus* 'John Gray'.  
Single silver epergne,  
£75, The Dining  
Room Shop.



**A**s any galanthophile will tell you, no two snowdrop varieties are the same, but you need to get pretty close to tell the difference, and very close to be absolutely certain which is what. The things to look out for are the plant's vernation, or leaf arrangement, which will be flat or folded; its flower size and shape; and the unique green markings that each will display on its inner petals or tepals. The overall appearance of the flower is white, but some varieties show outer petals with distinctive green brushstrokes (such as *Galanthus* 'Kildare'), while others carry the green splashes on the three shorter, inner petals, and it is these that clarify a variety's identity.

*Galanthus plicatus* 'Trym' carries a single splash, or engraving, at its petal's rim, while G. 'Armine' has both this and a second engraving at the petal base. Look out for the tiny inverted wing-shaped hallmark on *G. nivalis*, the bold inverted heart of G. 'Bertram Anderson', the cloven hoof-mark of G. *elwesii* 'Deer Slot', and the shears or scissor shape on G. 'Lord Lieutenant'. Every variety of snowdrop will carry its own mark or have an alternative distinguishing feature, so there are at least 600 different combinations. In order to be registered as a separate variety, the flower has to be considered sufficiently different from any other currently named variety.

***Galanthus nivalis* dwarf form** has exquisitely delicate markings. **Silver cup**, £170; **silver spade**, £70; both The Dining Room Shop.





1. *Galanthus elwesii* 'Bushmills'.
  2. *G.* 'Lord Lieutenant'.
  3. *G.* 'Kildare'.
  4. *G. nivalis*.
  5. *G. elwesii* var. *monostictus*.
  6. *G. elwesii* 'Deer Slot'.
  7. *G. elwesii* 'Armine'.
  8. *G. elwesii* Edward Whittall Group.
  9. *G. plicatus* 'Wendy's Gold'.
  10. *G.* 'Robin Hood'.
  11. *G. plicatus* 'Trym'.
  12. *G.* 'Bertram Anderson'.
- Silver-plated magnifying glass, £45, The Dining Room Shop.**

### Where to see

■ **Colesbourne Park**, Gloucestershire, where the snowdrops featured on these pages were photographed, grows 250 varieties. The collection is tended by the Elwes family (of *G. elwesii* fame), and expert Dr John Grimshaw. Plant sales throughout the year. For visiting, and study day details, call 01242 870264 or visit [colesbournegardens.org.uk](http://colesbournegardens.org.uk).

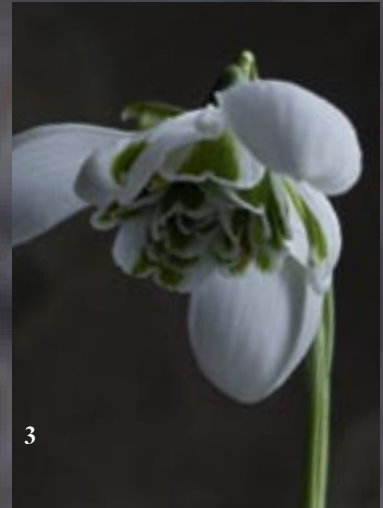
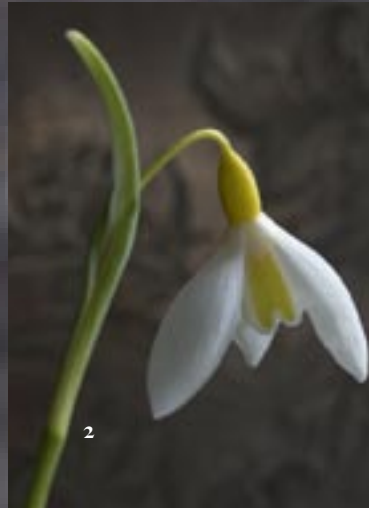
■ **Rodmarton Manor**, in Gloucestershire, has 150 clearly labelled snowdrop varieties throughout the garden, and specimens available to order (lifted and dispatched in the green). Pre-booked group tours available. For details, call 01285 841253 or visit [rodmarton-manor.co.uk](http://rodmarton-manor.co.uk).

■ **Lambrook Manor Gardens**, in Somerset, is home to an impressive collection of rare snowdrops, with more than 60 different varieties. For opening times, call 01460 240328 or visit [eastlambrook.co.uk](http://eastlambrook.co.uk).

■ **Welford Park**, in Berkshire, has woods of *Galanthus nivalis*, planted so densely you can inhale their delicate scent. For opening times, call 01488 608691 or visit [welfordpark.co.uk](http://welfordpark.co.uk). ▶



1. *Galanthus* Edward Whittall Group.
2. *G. plicatus* 'Wendy's Gold'.
3. *G.* 'Titania'



*Galanthus*. 'Modern Art' (on tray); *G.* 'S Arnott' and *G.* 'Lord Lieutenant' (in pot). **Mustard pot**, £10, The Dining Room Shop.

## For more information

**Avon Bulbs** sells more than 30 different varieties of snowdrops; plants posted in the green. Call 01460 242177 or visit [avonbulbs.co.uk](http://avonbulbs.co.uk).

### READ MORE

*Snowdrops: A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus* by **Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw** (Griffin Press, £45; order direct on 01242 870567) is a comprehensive book which includes detailed

photographs illustrating many snowdrop varieties. **Snowdrops by Jackie Murray** (Green & White, £3.50), is a beginner's guide to snowdrops, with many photographic references included for identification. Available from [pm-images.co.uk](http://pm-images.co.uk), which also runs a course on identifying snowdrops on 6 and 7 February 2009. For more information, see the website above.

## Snowdrops offer

We are offering *Homes & Gardens* readers the opportunity to buy 25 single flowering snowdrop bulbs for £8.49, or 50 bulbs for £16.98 plus a further 25 completely FREE. To order and for terms and conditions, call 0844 573 1683 and quote XHGxxx. Plants are

dispatched in the green from February 2009. Orders will be acknowledged by letter, advising you of your dispatch date. Your contact for supply of goods is with Thompson & Morgan (Young Plants) Limited. Closing date for this offer is 14 March 2009.

### WHERE TO BUY PAGE 157 NEXT MONTH ARCHITECTURAL PLANTS

Do not pick snowdrops in the wild, and be sure that you only buy from reputable bulb suppliers or nurseries, such as that listed above