

Hazel *Corylus avellana*

Hazel is a deciduous shrub or small tree which can grow from 6 to 12 metres tall. Hazel are often found in hedgerows as they cut well and can be quite dense. Hazel tolerate shade well and flourish as an understorey tree in woodland.

Hazel has traditionally been coppiced regularly to produce thin flexible rods which can be woven and put to many uses. Stems are cut near to the ground and then are quick to re-grow.



Coppiced Hazel in summer and winter, forming small dense multi-stemmed trees.



Leaves are round to oval, hairy and pointed at the tip. The edges are toothed.

Hazel trees have smooth, grey-brown bark which peels with age.

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One of the most familiar features of the hazel is its golden yellow catkins, or lamb's tails which can be seen as early as January tossing in the wind. Their powdery yellow pollen fertilises the female flowers, which will later develop into the hazelnuts.

Interesting Facts:

Hazel are an unusual native tree because they flower and pollinate in the middle of winter.

Hazel is believed to be one of the earliest colonists after the end of the last Ice Age, with hazelnuts one of the first foods picked in Britain.



Male and female flowers grow on the same tree. From January to March the tiny red female flowers may be spotted above the clusters of male catkins. Female flowers are tiny, erect and bud-like, with bright red styles. The flowers must be pollinated by pollen from other hazel trees.

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Hazelnuts ripen in mid-August, but are often seized by grey squirrels. The nuts grow in clusters and have a woody shell enclosed in a cup of leafy bracts.



Hazel leaves turn yellow in autumn.



Hazel in the hedgerow



Male catkins begin to form in summer but don't reach maturity until December or January. They can be spotted amongst the autumn leaves.