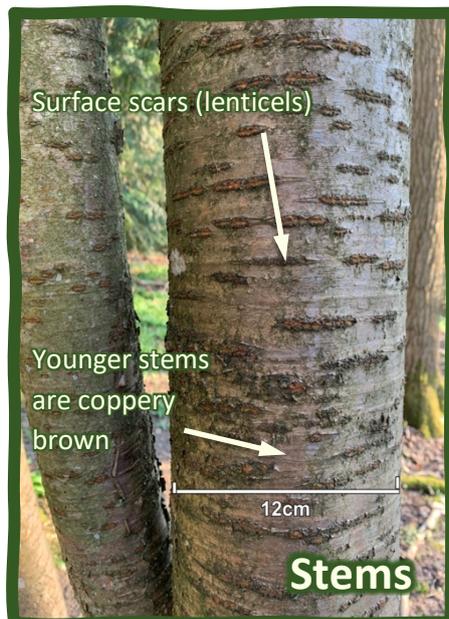


# PLANT ID: common hazel

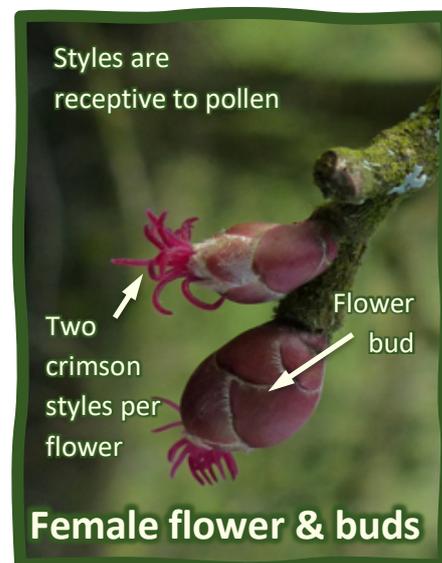
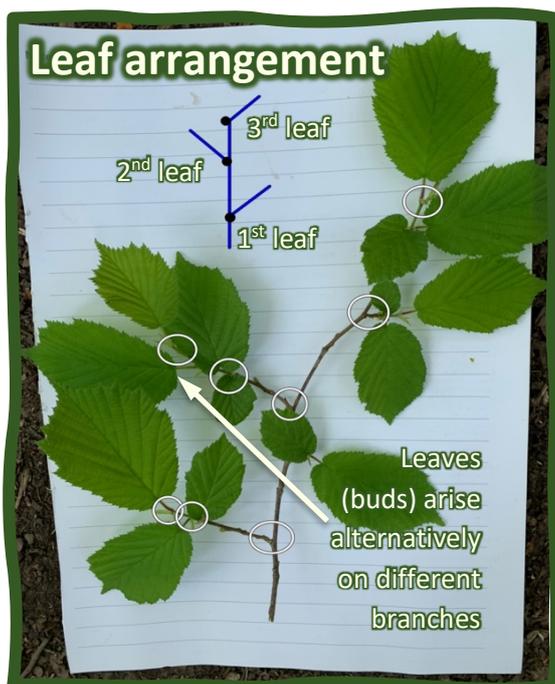
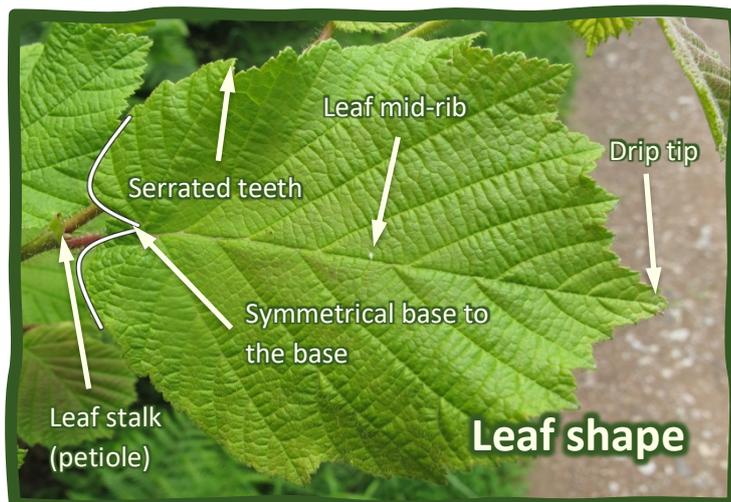
*Corylus avellana* L.



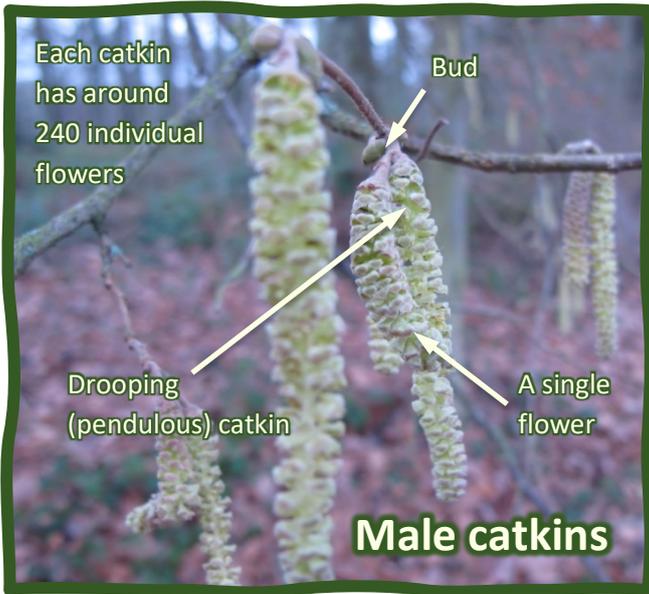
## Practical uses

In the past, coppicing a hazel helped produce charcoal for fuel and laths for the internal plastered panels within black and white timber framed houses.

**Collect the nuts from late August, to use as ammunition in homemade catapults.**



# PLANT ID: common hazel *Corylus avellana* L.



Hazelnuts can trigger tree nut allergies !



**Did you know?**

When found in a woodland, hazels will always have many woody stems that emerge from their lowest central point, giving them the appearance of very large badminton shuttlecocks. This is because the tree reacts to cutting at the base of the tree (referred to as coppicing) and regrows new stems.



**Helpful ID Tips**

The stems of the hazel tree will almost be straight and will have scars across them and be grey to coppery brown.

If found in a hedgerow, the subtle 'zig zag' twigs, the symmetrical dull, downy leaves with drip-tips and red tipped hairs on young twigs will also help.

**Reproduction strategies:**

**Pollination:** pollinated by insects and the wind.

**Seed dispersal:** spread by mammals.



# PLANT ID: common hazel

*Corylus avellana* L.

## Fact File:

**CURRENT STATUS:** Least Concern of becoming extinct  
**LOCATION:** Widespread across Europe

### Plant Description (aka Taxonomy)

Hazel is a wild native of Europe. It is a tall, deciduous shrub – up to 8 metres tall – that can be considered a small tree. It is a member of the birch family (*Betulaceae*), which includes some other familiar trees you might have heard of such as birch and alder. Members of this family all have separate male (**catkin**) and female flowers.



**Flowers:** January to March, though male **catkins** will begin to appear from the October before.

#### Flower Structure:

They both appear before the leaves emerge. The drooping, pendulous male flowers (catkins) are 2-8cm long. The female flower is much less obvious to see. Their vivid red **styles** are 5mm long and emerge from the tip of what resembles a small green bud.



**Fruits** from September to October.

Fruits are known as hazelnuts. When ripe they are oval, brown and woody and up to 2cm long. In late summer they begin to appear in clusters as a light green globule, wrapped into a leafy green package.



#### Leaf

Rough, double-toothed leaf, downy to the touch and dull in appearance, 5-12cm long. Rounded to oval in shape with a variable drawn-out 'drip-tip' at one end and a cordate bottom at the other. Almost symmetrical along the leaf mid-rib.



#### Habitat:

It is a very common large shrub that is mainly associated with the understorey of deciduous woodlands; planted in hedgerows and can appear randomly in other scrubby places.



#### Bud:

Green and flattened, appearing like a raisin.

## ALIASES

Also known as European hazel and lamb's-tails because of its drooping, bushy, tail-like catkins.

## What to look for

Look for the many straight upright woody stems that grow from the shrubs most-lowest central point.



## Best time to see it and use it

August – October: Look out for the grey squirrels harvesting the nuts.

Late winter: The male catkins are more conspicuous now as they are electric yellow in colour and will billow out puffs of pollen when shaken.

Winter and very early spring: **The young twigs** have a distinct mix of hairs. If you have good eyesight, look out for the **longer red tipped hairs** that stand head and shoulders above the surrounding shorter translucent hairs.

## Stem and trunk

It's twigs subtly 'zig zag', a feature that is much more obvious in winter; especially when its alternate green buds and catkins are visible. The young bark is coppery brown with short raised horizontal scars. The bark tends to peel with age.

## FOOD WEB

Nectar gathered by insects.  
Nuts eaten by mammals, especially dormice and squirrel.

## IMPERSONATORS

The multi-stemmed Kentish cob-nut (*Corylus maxima*) which are grown in orchards. The single stemmed Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*) which is planted as a street tree. Other trees with similar leaves growing close-by are: the elms (*Ulmus spp.*) and the limes (*Tilia spp.*). Lime leaves are shiny and are strongly heart shaped. Elms have an asymmetrical leaf, while hazel is symmetrical. Fold its leaf in half along its mid-rib. If it's hazel the underside will be almost concealed, while if its elm the leaf bottom will be visible.



# PLANT ID: common hazel *Corylus avellana* L.

**What's in a name?** Hazel's common name comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'haesel knut', meaning hat and probably refers to the leaves that wrap the top of the nut itself resembling a cap.

## Botany glossary (part 1)

**Lenticels** raised marking on a shoot that is a pore.

**Bark** the thick outer protective layer of a tree trunk.

**Stem** vertical shoot that connects the roots, leaves and flowers together.

**Leaf mid rib** the centre of a leaf from which side veins run out from.

**Petiole** a stalk of a leaf.

**Style** related to the female parts of the flower. A stalk like feature that connects the stigma and ovary, allowing a pollen grain to travel downwards into the ovary at its base.



## Botany glossary (part 2)

**Bud scale** protect the developing leaves and branch growth for the following year.

**Leaf scar** the mark left on a twig after a leaf as fallen away from it in autumn.

**Catkin** consisting of a spike of tiny flowers, usually all one sex - e.g. Hazel.

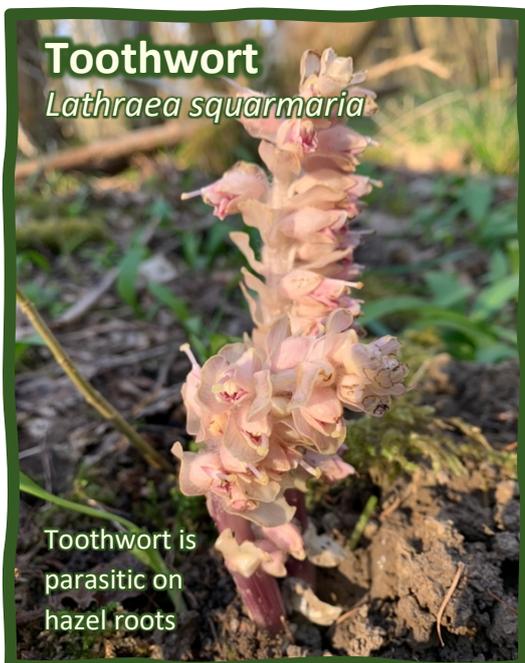
**Bract** a small swelling along a branch or at its end from which new leaves, flowers grow.

**Nut** a dry hard fruit, e.g. Hazel nut.

**Stamen** male part of the flower

**Anther** pollen-bearing part of the Stamen (male) found at the tip.

Get up close to the hazel by taking a virtual tour using the Pappus film library.



## Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*

Mythical plant of legends ...  
... a 'vampire' plant that needs close contact with hazel to reproduce its next generation successfully. All helped by kindly Ants that carry the seed down into their nests beside the roots.

## Global distribution

Found almost everywhere in the British Isles and across Europe except a few places where the soils are more acidic.

## Oldest Largest Tallest

Germany holds the record for the oldest tree at 200 years of age.

Sweden has the tallest tree at 16.3 metres.

Spain has a tree with the largest girth at 3 metres.

## Global species risk of extinction

(IUCN – Red Data List)

Hazel's existence is classed as of 'Least Concern'

