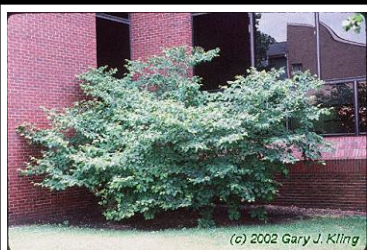


Large Shrub (8' - 15')  
Deciduous

Some Natives  
Map #90

# Witchhazel

(*Hamamelis* spp.)  
Family: *Hamamelidaceae*



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Common W. - *H. virginiana*



Vernal W. - *H. vernalis*

**Leaves:** simple, broadly oval, with roughly indented margins that are quite variable, deep veins that run out to the margins.

**Buds:** alternate; vegetative—"naked", only loosely covered with a leafy scale, tan or brownish, fuzzy; flower buds - several round or oval buds on a stalk.

**Stems:** often have the empty flower bases persisting.

**Bark:** smooth gray to gray-brown.

**Flowers:** Small clusters of flowers, each 1" across, are composed of 1/2 - 2/3" long bright yellow strap-like petals which roll up in cold weather and unroll on warm days. Mildly, pungently fragrant. Common W. (*H. virginiana*) flowers in late fall but are masked by yellow fall leaves until they drop. Vernal W. (*H. vernalis*) and all others flower in very early spring (or late winter) before any leaves appear. One of the first woody plants to flower.

**Fruits:** The fruits are a green turning gray woody capsule that splits when ripe, forcibly ejecting the black seeds. They take about 12 months to mature but offer no ornamental benefit.

**Habit:** large shrub with an upright spreading, v-shaped habit; may be pruned to form a small tree with either single or multiple trunks.

**Culture:** Requires a neutral to acid soil with adequate moisture. Full sun to shade. Valued for shade tolerance and unusual flowering times.

**Cultivars:** None for Common W. but several for the other species.

**Miscellaneous:** Witchhazel's common name comes from the peculiar whirring sound made by the seeds being forcibly ejected from the capsules once they are ripe leading early settlers to think them bewitched. The extract witchhazel is distilled from the bark of young stems and roots.

**Related species:** *H. x intermedia* - a group of hybrids of *H. japonica* (Japanese W.) and *H. mollis* (Chinese W.) which includes many lovely cultivars including: 'Arnold's Promise' - raised and introduced by the Arnold Arboretum; flower petals bright yellow and 1" long each with a base that is red in color; 'Jelena' - or Copper Beauty - each 1" long flower petal is red at the base, orange in the middle and yellow at the tip and crinkled and wavy with good fall color.



Fall color



Fruit capsules and seeds



'Arnold's Promise'



'Jelena'

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