

Hazel

Corylus avellana

Plants · Deciduous shrub · catkins Jan–Mar



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A multi-stemmed deciduous shrub or small tree of hedgerow and woodland understorey, with soft, round, hairy leaves that come to a short point. The dangling yellow male catkins — lambs' tails — open in the depths of winter, long before the leaves, while the female flowers are minute crimson tufts easily missed on the same twig. Hazel is common right across the Dumfries area.

BEHAVIOUR

Hazel coppices exceptionally well: cut to the base it regrows a crop of straight poles, and coppiced stools worked on rotation can live for centuries. This produced the hurdles, thatching spars and hedging stakes of traditional rural economies. The nuts are a critical autumn food — squirrels, wood mice, bank voles, jays and nuthatches all take them, each leaving a differently gnawed shell.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Birches (Betulaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 12 m, usually multi-stemmed
STATUS	Native; common, and the classic coppice shrub

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